

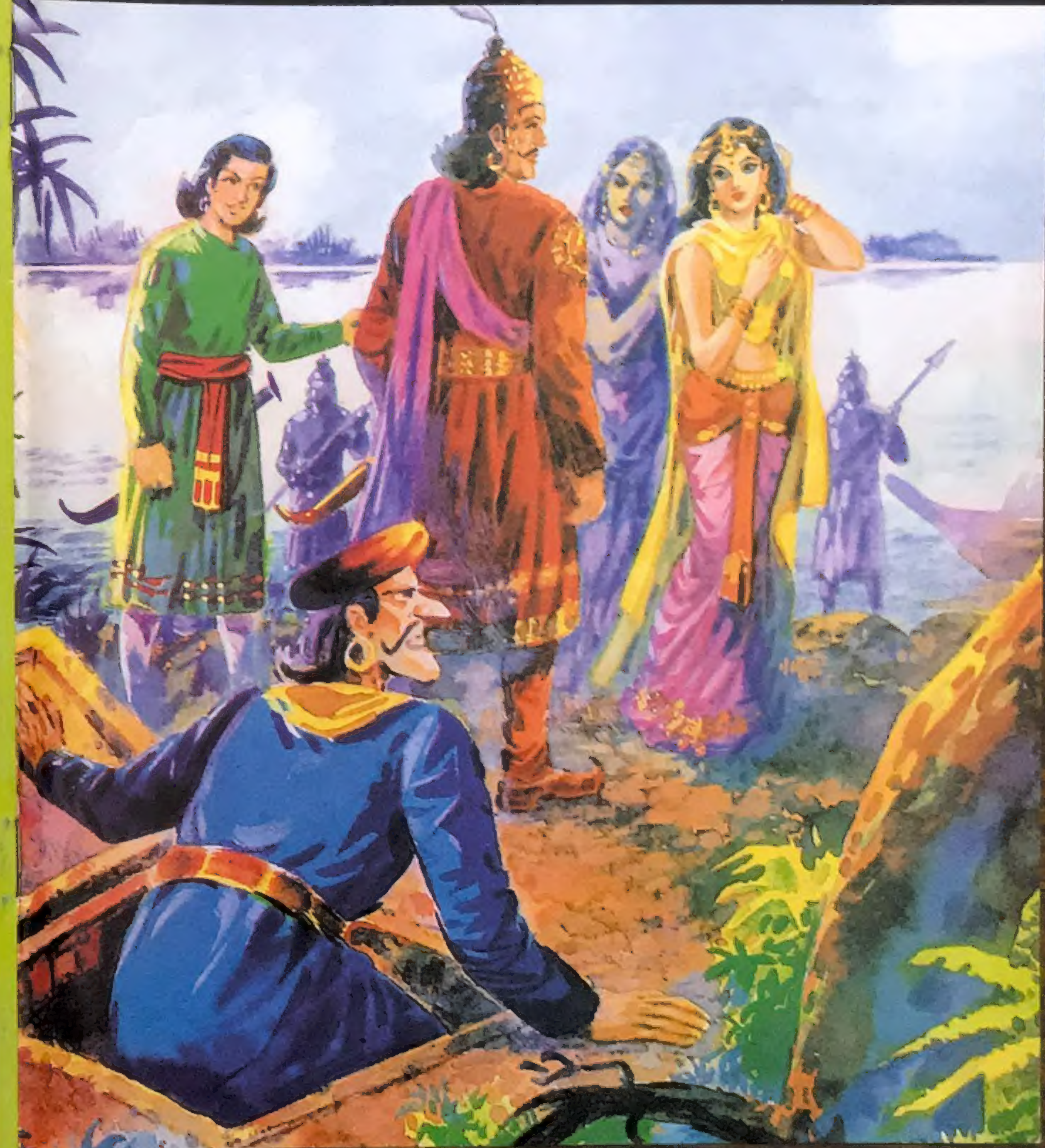
FABLES &
HUMOUR



THE DEADLY FEAST

JATAKA TALES - WISDOM CONQUERS ALL

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THE DEADLY FEAST

Even wily parrots risk their lives for the gentle Aushadha Kumar, a shining example of right thinking and right living described in the Buddhist Jataka tales. Scheming rivals, foolish rulers and wicked courtiers leave him undaunted. He can organise King Vaideha's security, a network of spies and a royal wedding with equal flair. So, when a deadly plot is revealed, it is Aushadha who swings into action...

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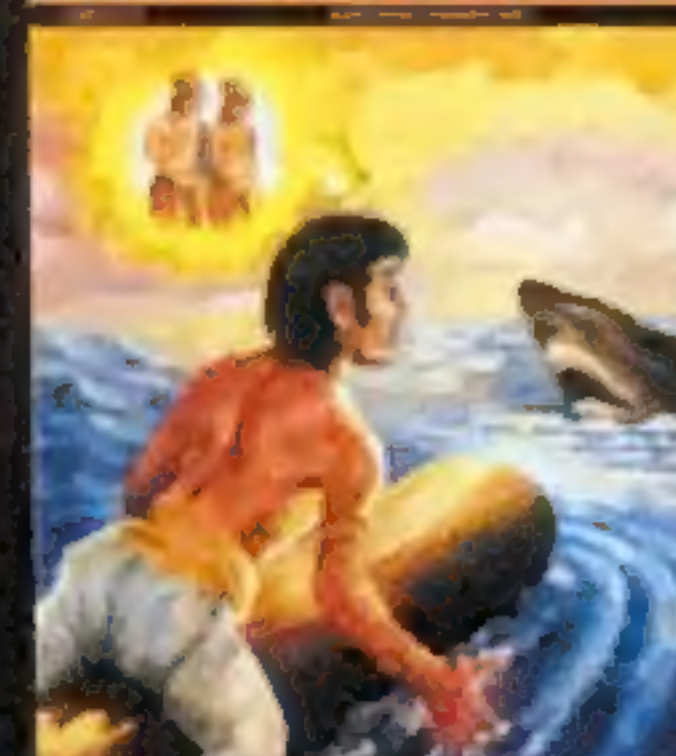


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THE DEADLY FEAST

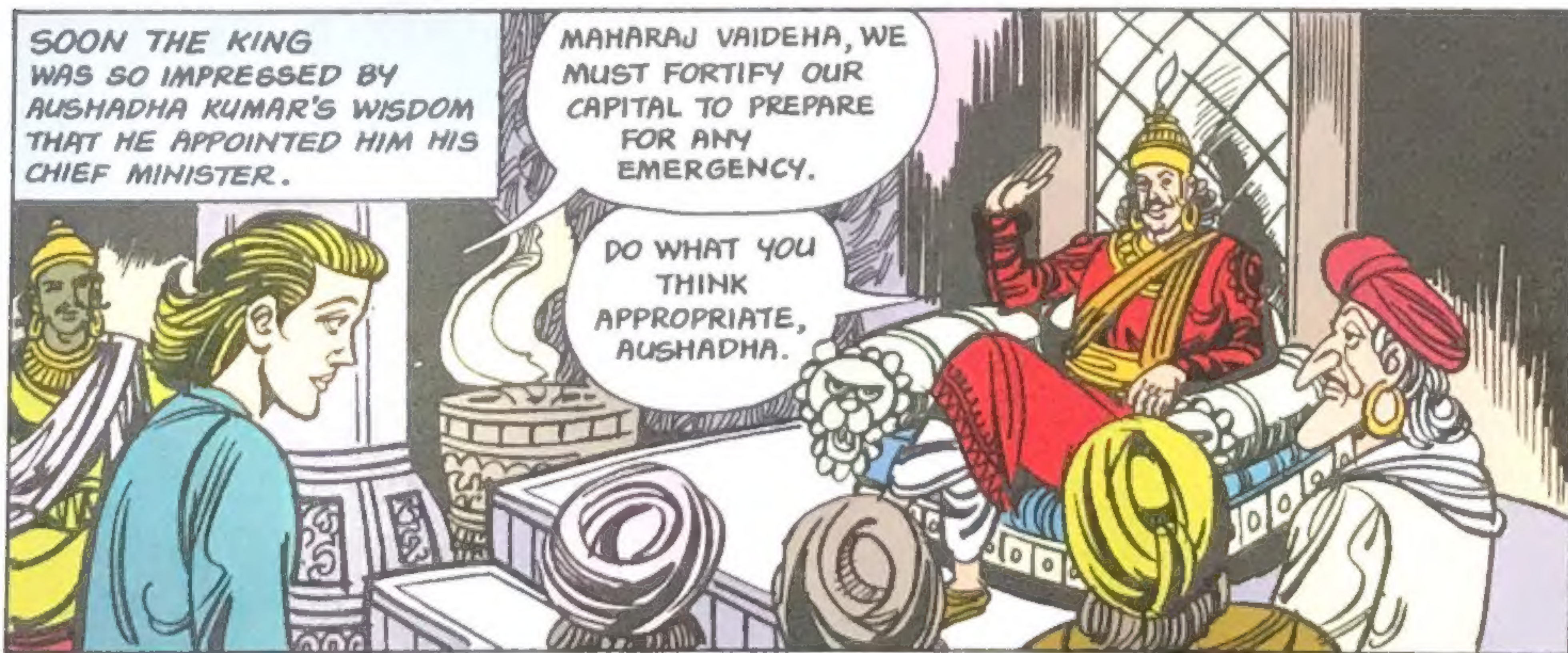
AUSHADHA KUMAR WAS A REINCARNATION OF BODHISATTVA. DAZZLED BY HIS INTELLECTUAL FEATS, VAIDEHA, KING OF VIDEHA ADOPTED HIM AND BROUGHT HIM UP.



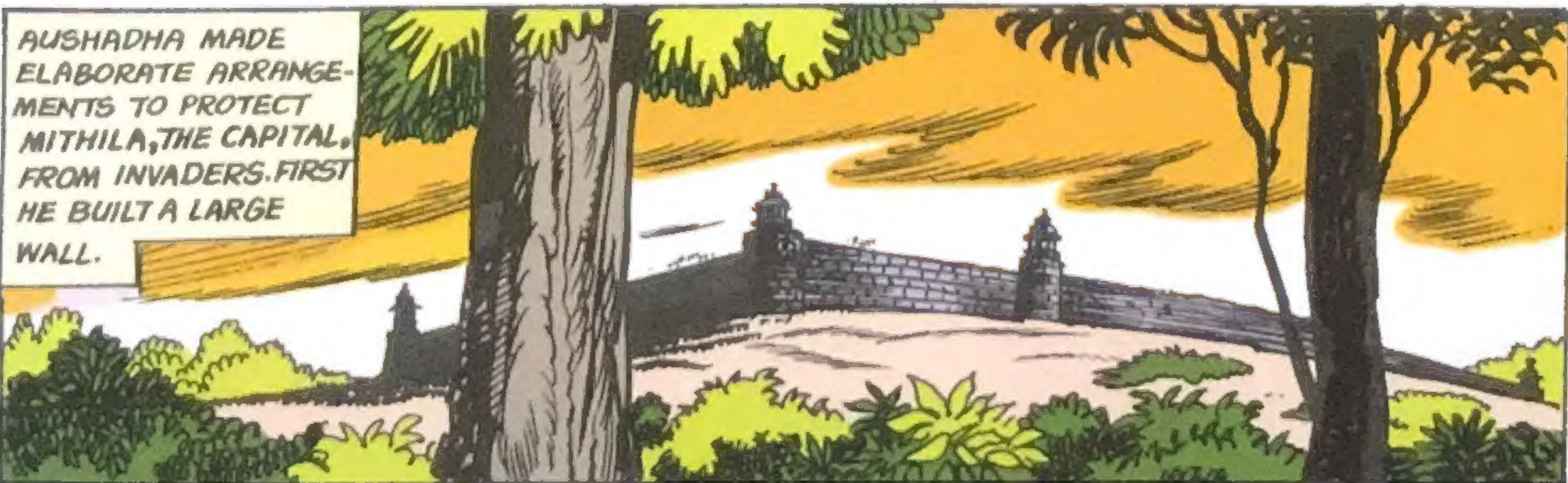
SOON THE KING WAS SO IMPRESSED BY AUSHADHA KUMAR'S WISDOM THAT HE APPOINTED HIM HIS CHIEF MINISTER.

MAHARAJ VAIDEHA, WE MUST FORTIFY OUR CAPITAL TO PREPARE FOR ANY EMERGENCY.

DO WHAT YOU THINK APPROPRIATE, AUSHADHA.



AUSHADHA MADE ELABORATE ARRANGEMENTS TO PROTECT MITHILA, THE CAPITAL, FROM INVADERS. FIRST HE BUILT A LARGE WALL.



THE WALL HAD WATCHTOWERS FOR SENTRIES.



THEN HE BUILT THREE MOATS AROUND THE WALL. THE FIRST HE FILLED WITH WATER AND THE SECOND WITH SLUSH. THE THIRD WAS LEFT DRY.



IN THE FORTIFIED CITY HE CONSTRUCTED LARGE TANKS OF WATER AND STOCKED SUFFICIENT FOOD GRAINS.



THEN HE SELECTED A HUNDRED FAITHFUL WARRIORS AND SENT THEM TO THE HUNDRED KINGDOMS OF JAMBUDVEEPA *



WIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE KINGS BUT DO NOT REVEAL YOUR REAL IDENTITY...

...AND SEND ME REGULAR REPORTS OF THEIR PLANS.



THE MEN CARRIED OUT AUSHADHA'S BIDDING.

* ANCIENT NAME OF INDIA

WHILE AUSHADHA WAS MAKING ARRANGEMENTS TO PROTECT THE KINGDOM OF VIDEHA, KEVATTA, THE MINISTER OF PANCHALA WAS PLANNING TO EXPAND THE DOMAIN OF HIS KING, BRAHMADATTA.



KING BRAHMADATTA IS VERY GENEROUS TO ME...



...I OWE MY PROSPERITY TO HIM...



...I MUST HELP HIM TO BECOME THE OVERLORD OF JAMBUDVEEPA. MY STATUS ALSO WILL RISE WITH HIM.

AND SO, KEVATTA WORKED OUT A PLAN.

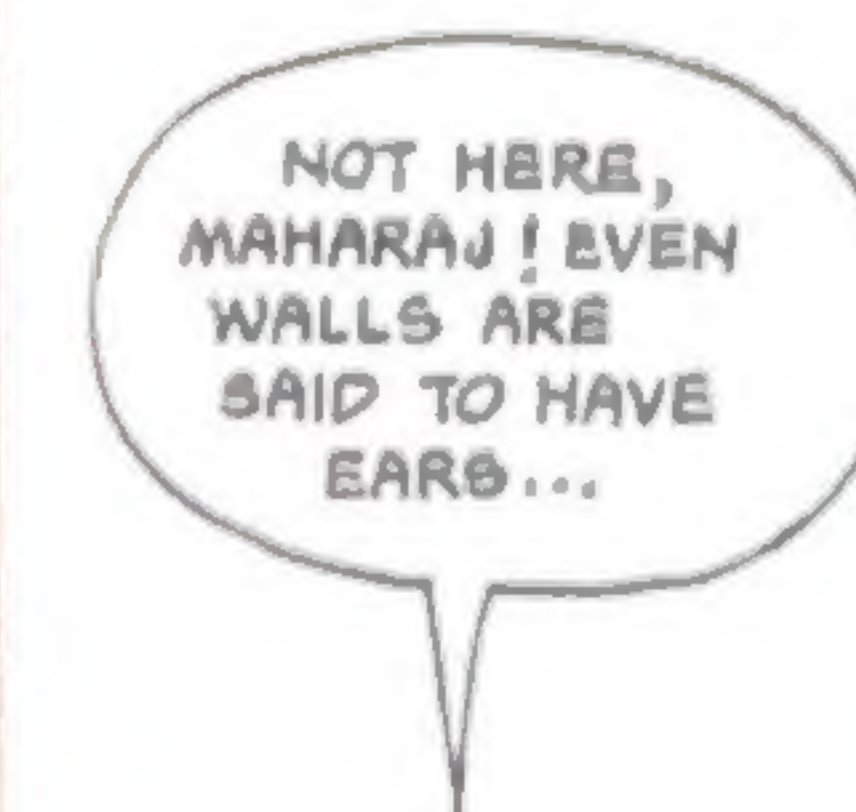
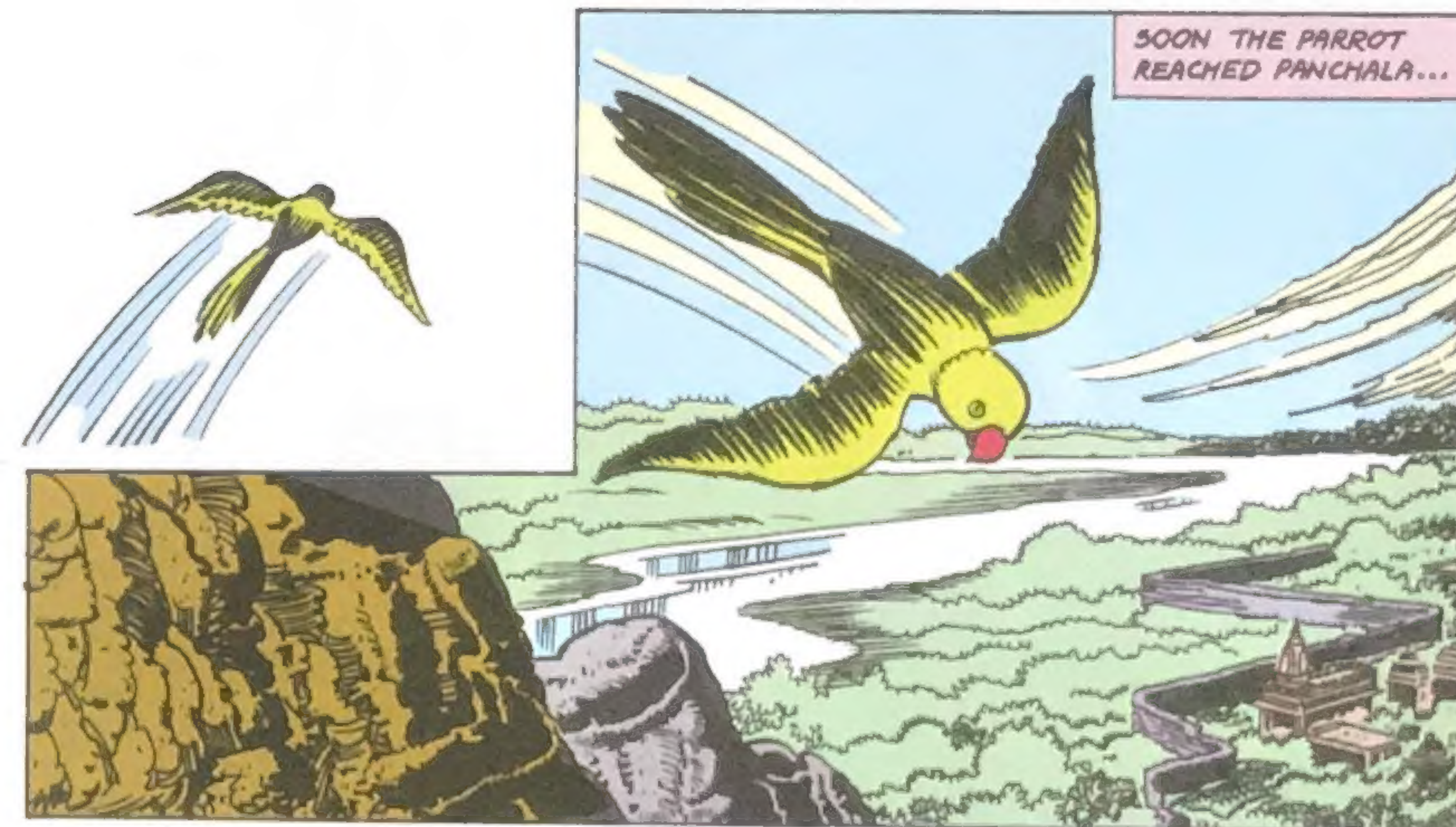
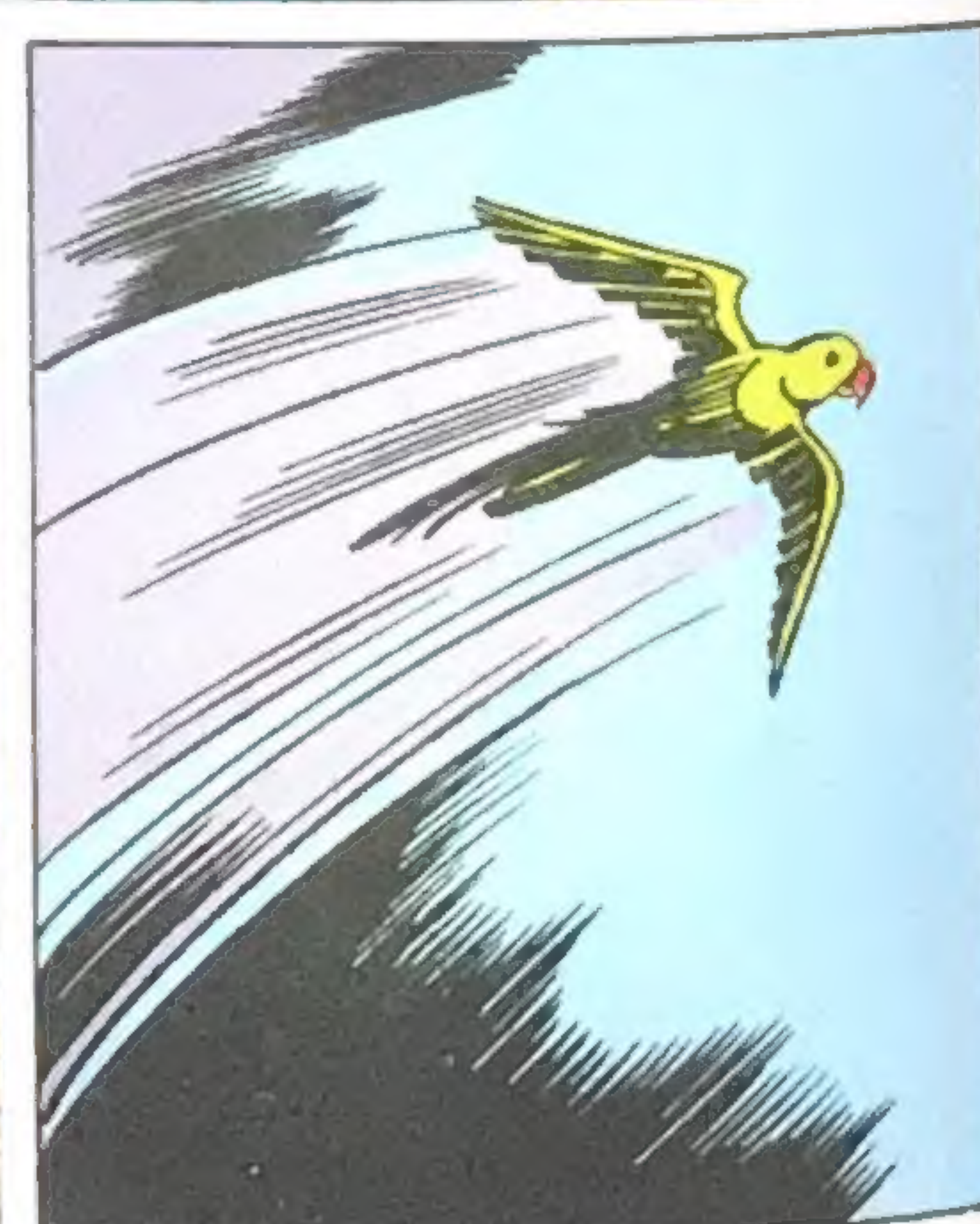


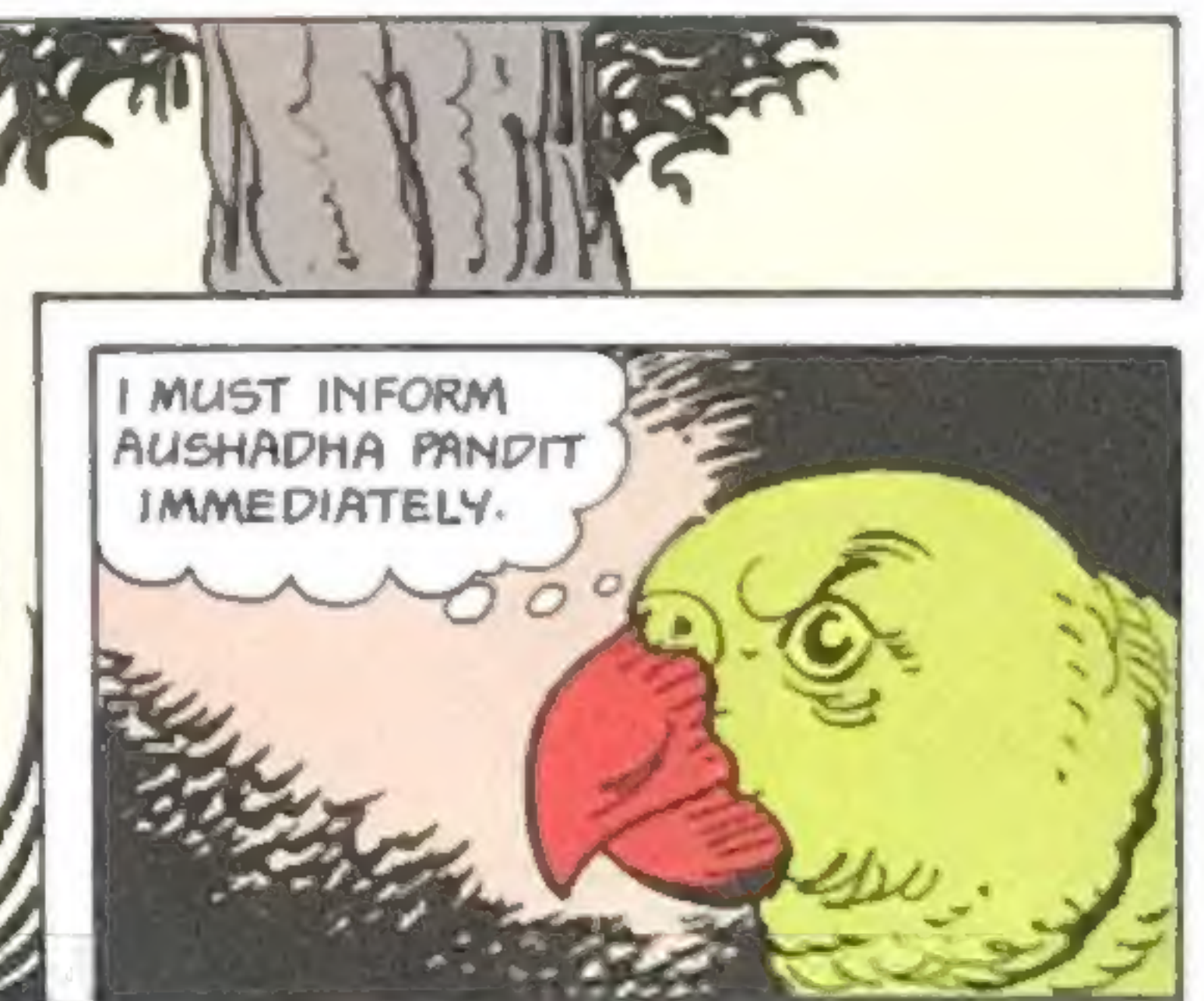
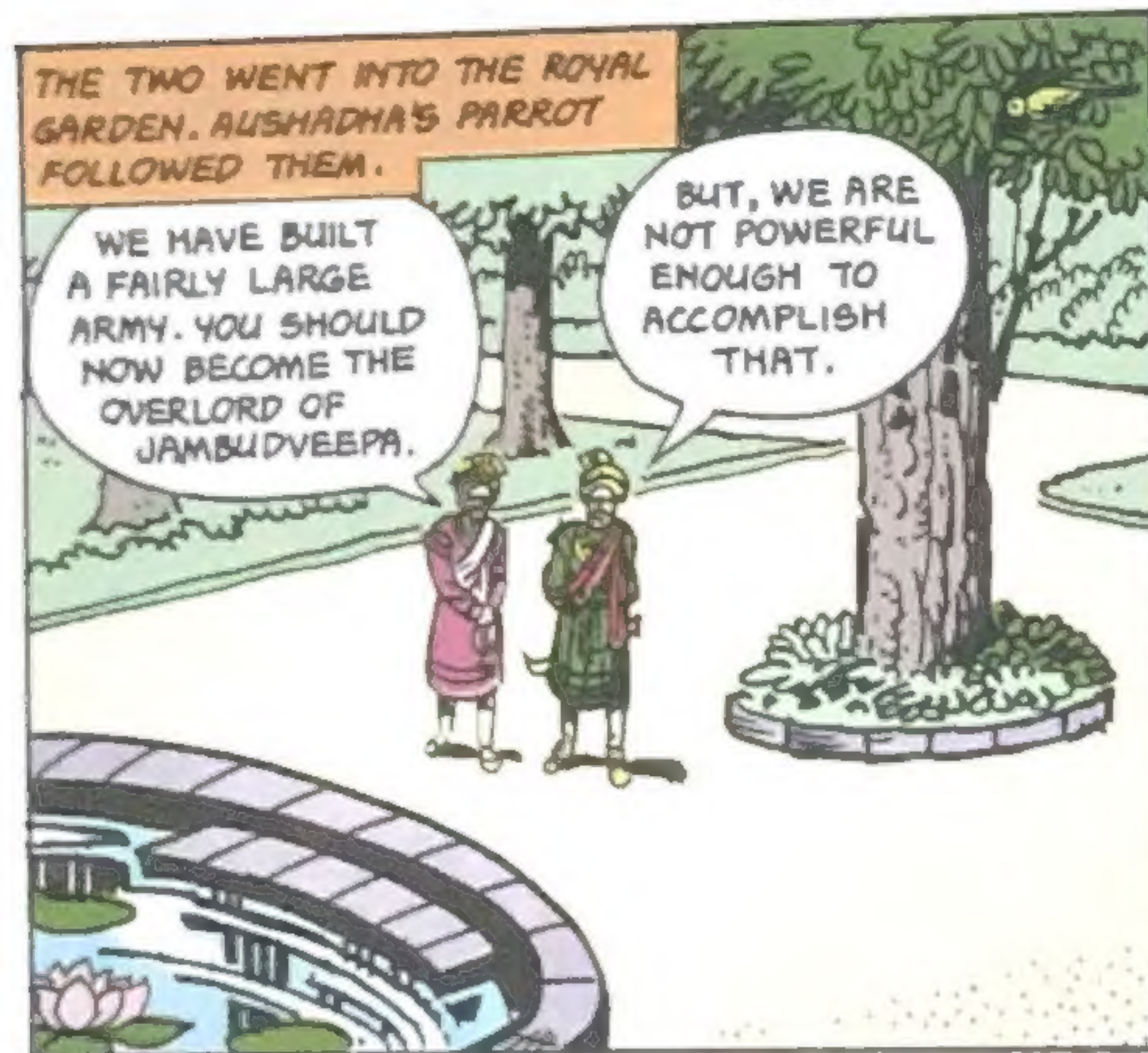
MAHARAJ BRAHMADATTA, WE MUST INCREASE OUR FORCES.

ONE OF AUSHADHA KUMAR'S SPIES WAS PRESENT IN THE COURT OF BRAHMADATTA.



KING BRAHMADATTA IS BUSY BUILDING A LARGE ARMY. I MUST INFORM PANDIT AUSHADHA KUMAR.





THE PARROT FLEW STRAIGHT TO AUSHADHA KUMAR. AUSHADHA WAS PERTURBED BY THE INFORMATION.

I CANNOT ALLOW SO MANY KINGS TO DIE...



...I SHALL PROTECT THEM FROM UNTIMELY DEATH. BUT...



... BEFORE THAT I MUST ARRANGE TO PROTECT MY OWN PEOPLE.



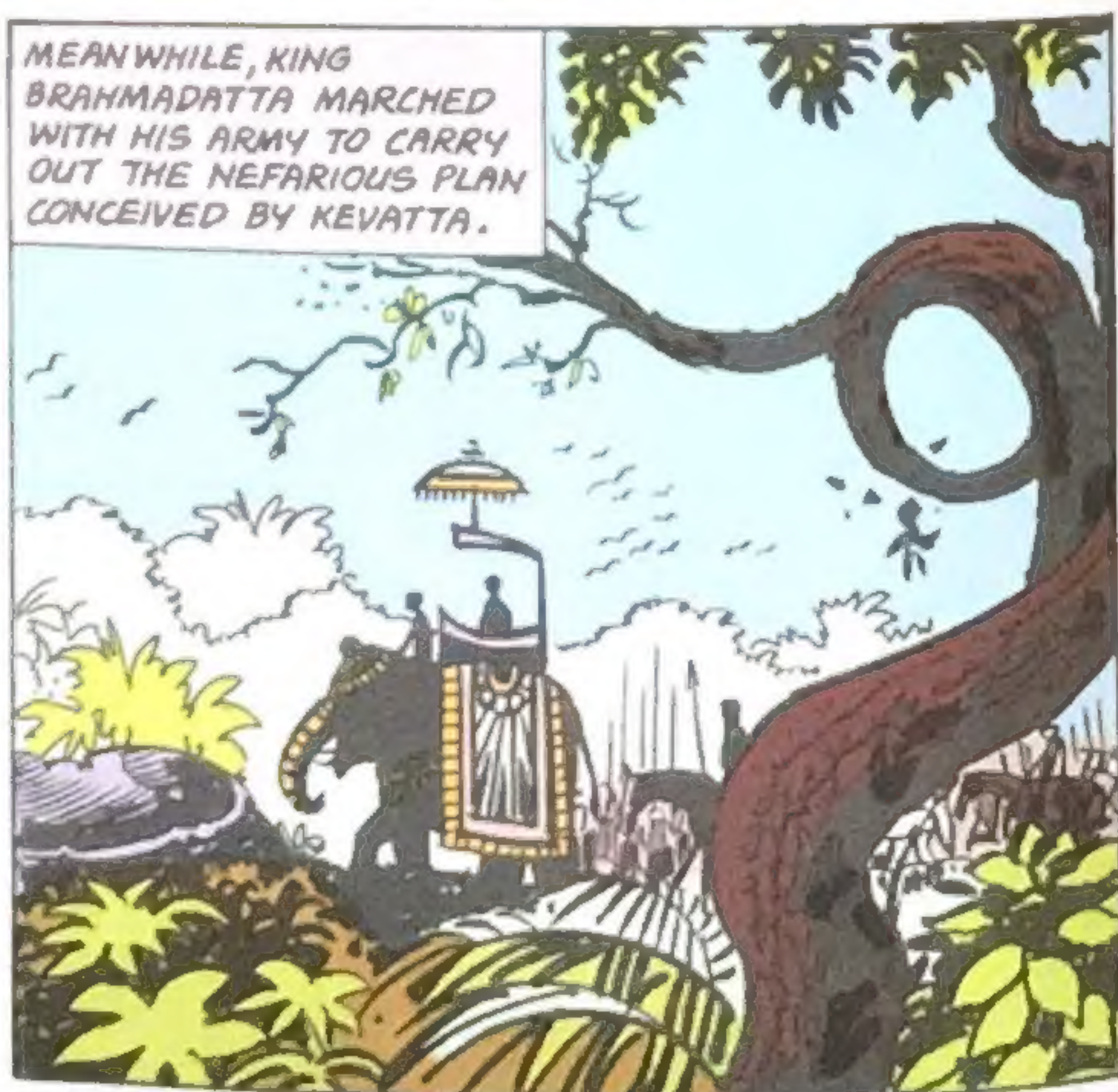
AUSHADHA KUMAR MOVED THE CITIZENS FROM THE OUTSKIRTS INTO THE FORTIFIED CITY.



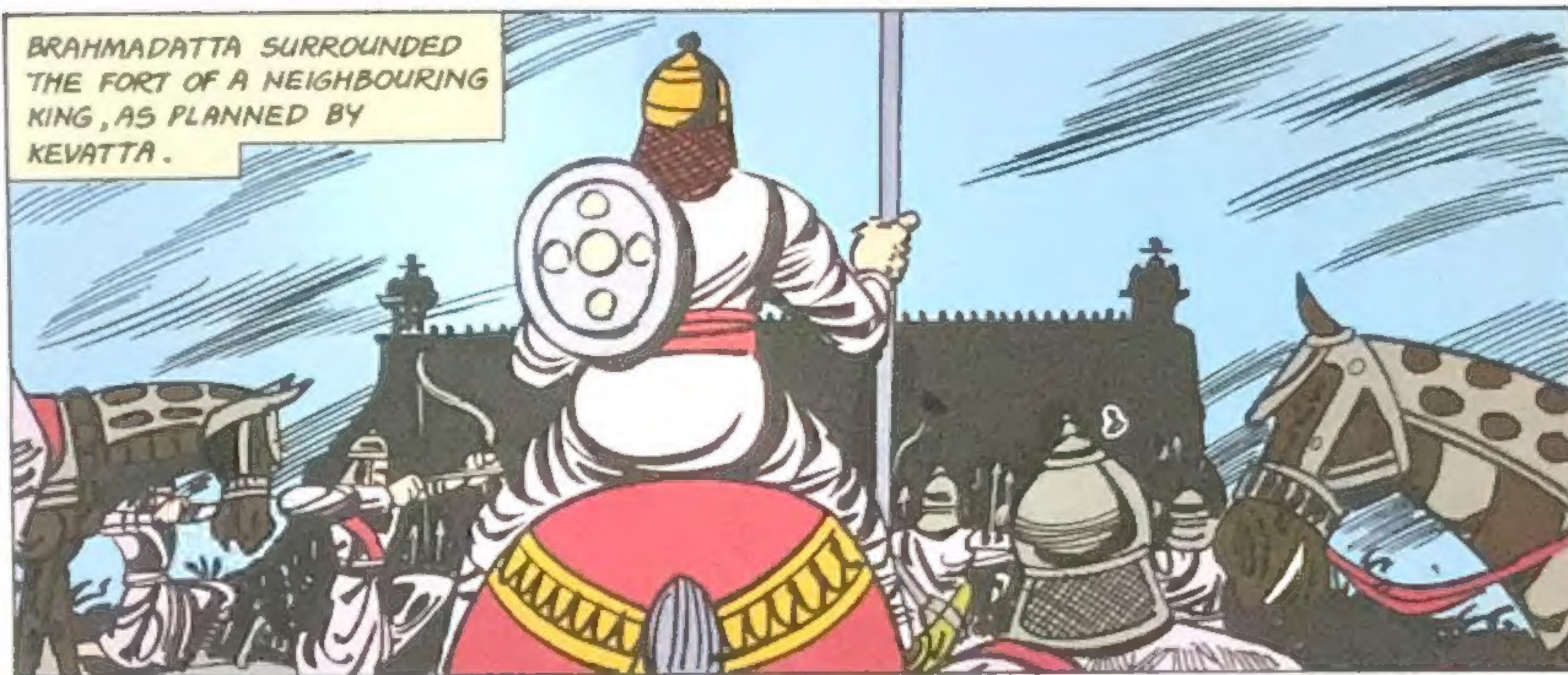
THEN HE STOCKED THE GRANARIES WITH AMPLE QUANTITIES OF FOOD GRAINS.



MEANWHILE, KING BRAHMADATTA MARCHED WITH HIS ARMY TO CARRY OUT THE NEFARIOUS PLAN CONCEIVED BY KEVATTA.



BRAHMADATTA SURROUNDED THE FORT OF A NEIGHBOURING KING, AS PLANNED BY KEVATTA.



NOW WE SHOULD SEND OUR MESSAGE OF PEACE!



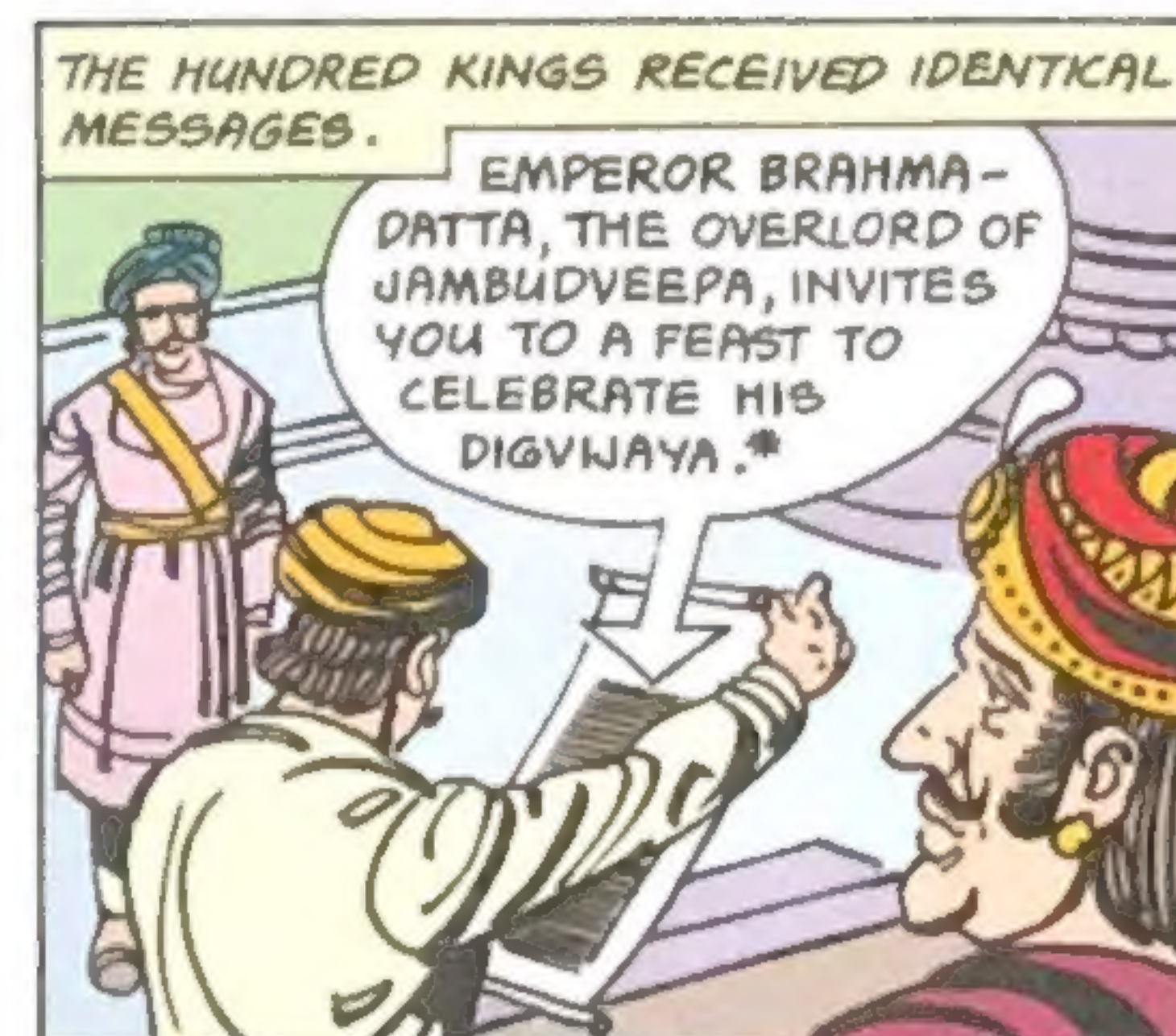
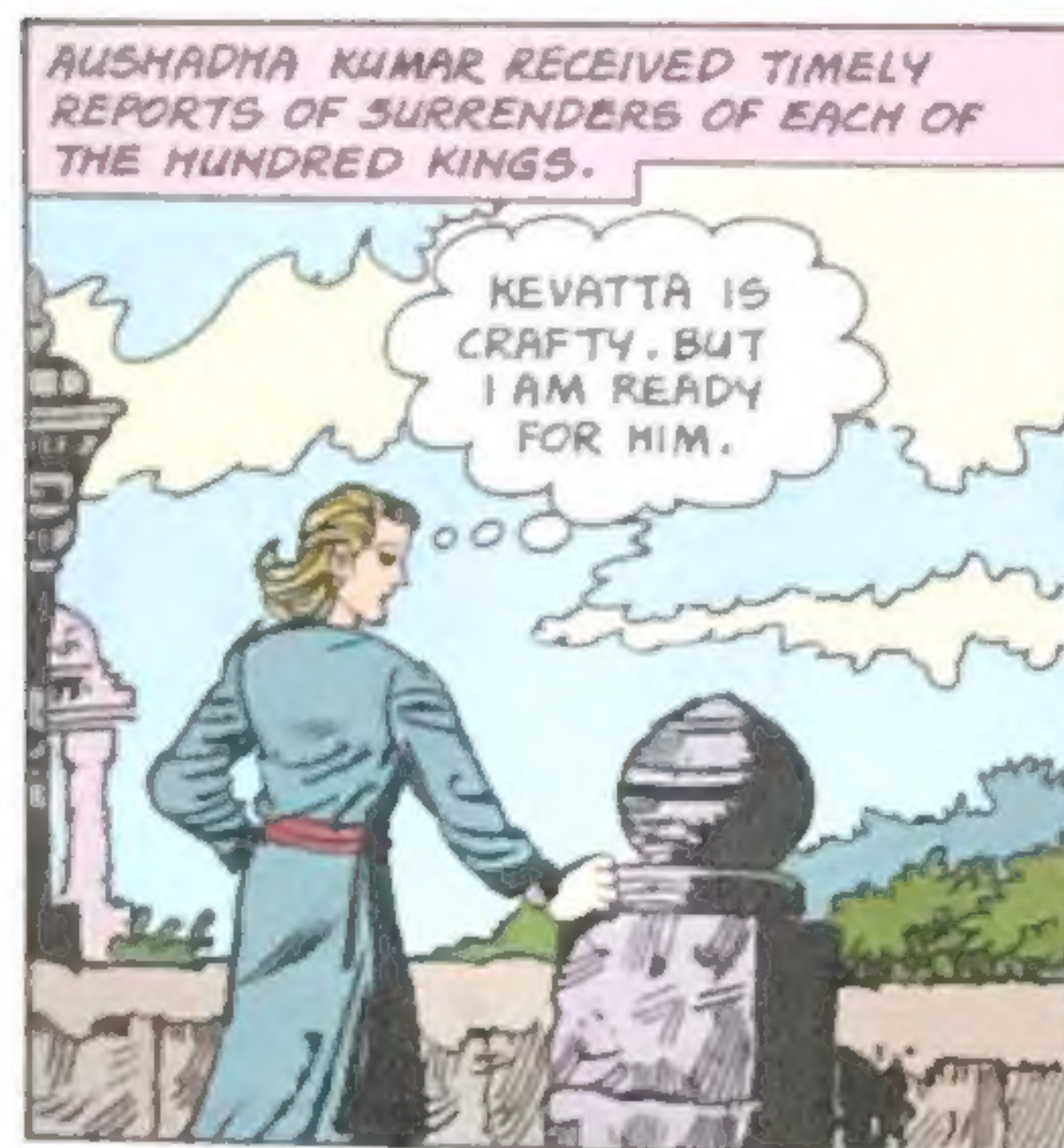
SOON, THE MESSENGER REACHED THE ENEMY KING.

ACCEPT OUR FRIENDSHIP AND PROSPER OR INVITE OUR WRATH AND PERISH.



AS ENVISAGED BY KEVATTA, THE ENEMY KING SURRENDERED WITHOUT GIVING FIGHT.







SO, AUSHADHA KUMAR'S MEN DESTROYED THE POISONED FOOD...

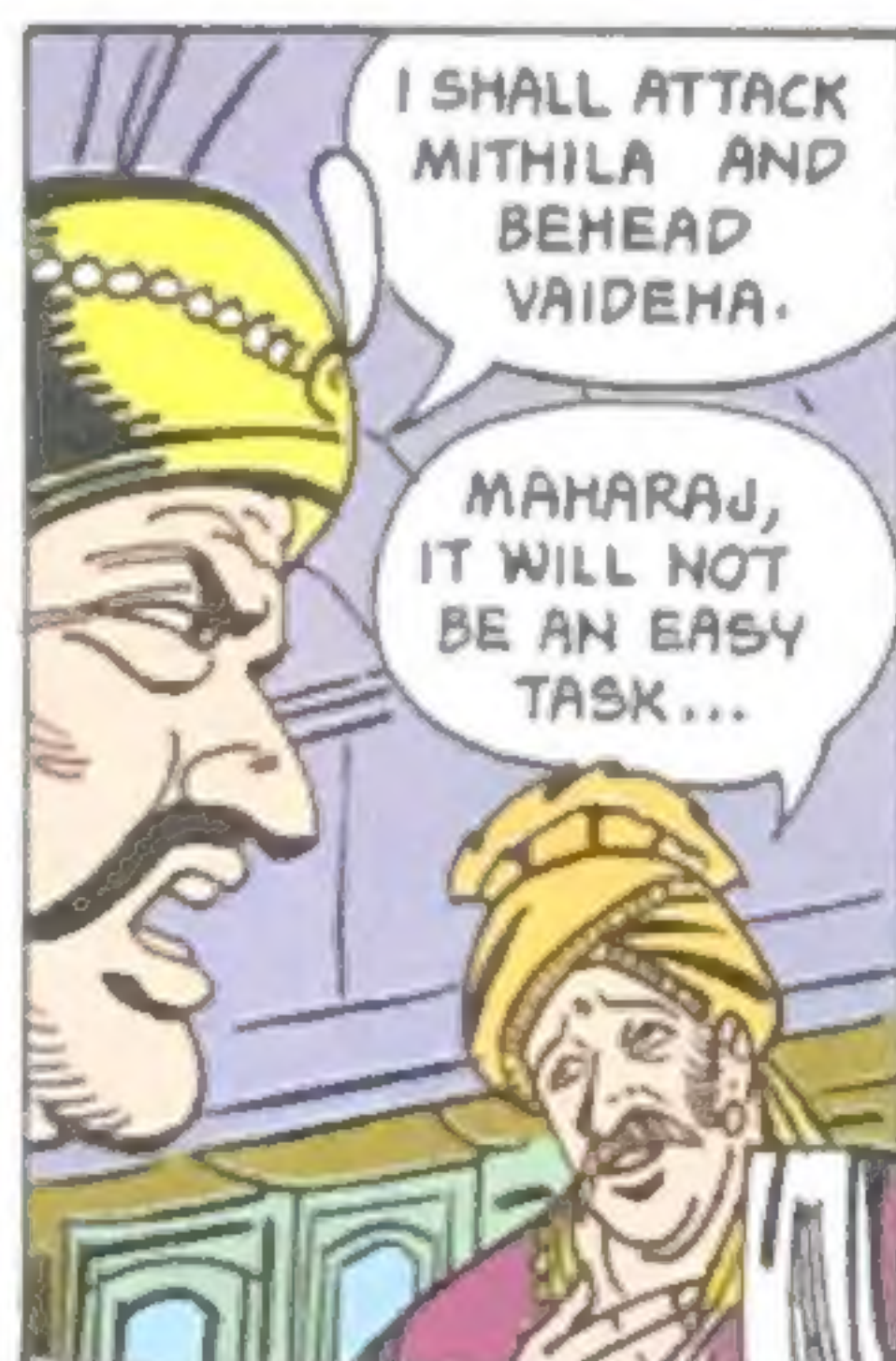


...AND ESCAPED ON SWIFT HORSES.



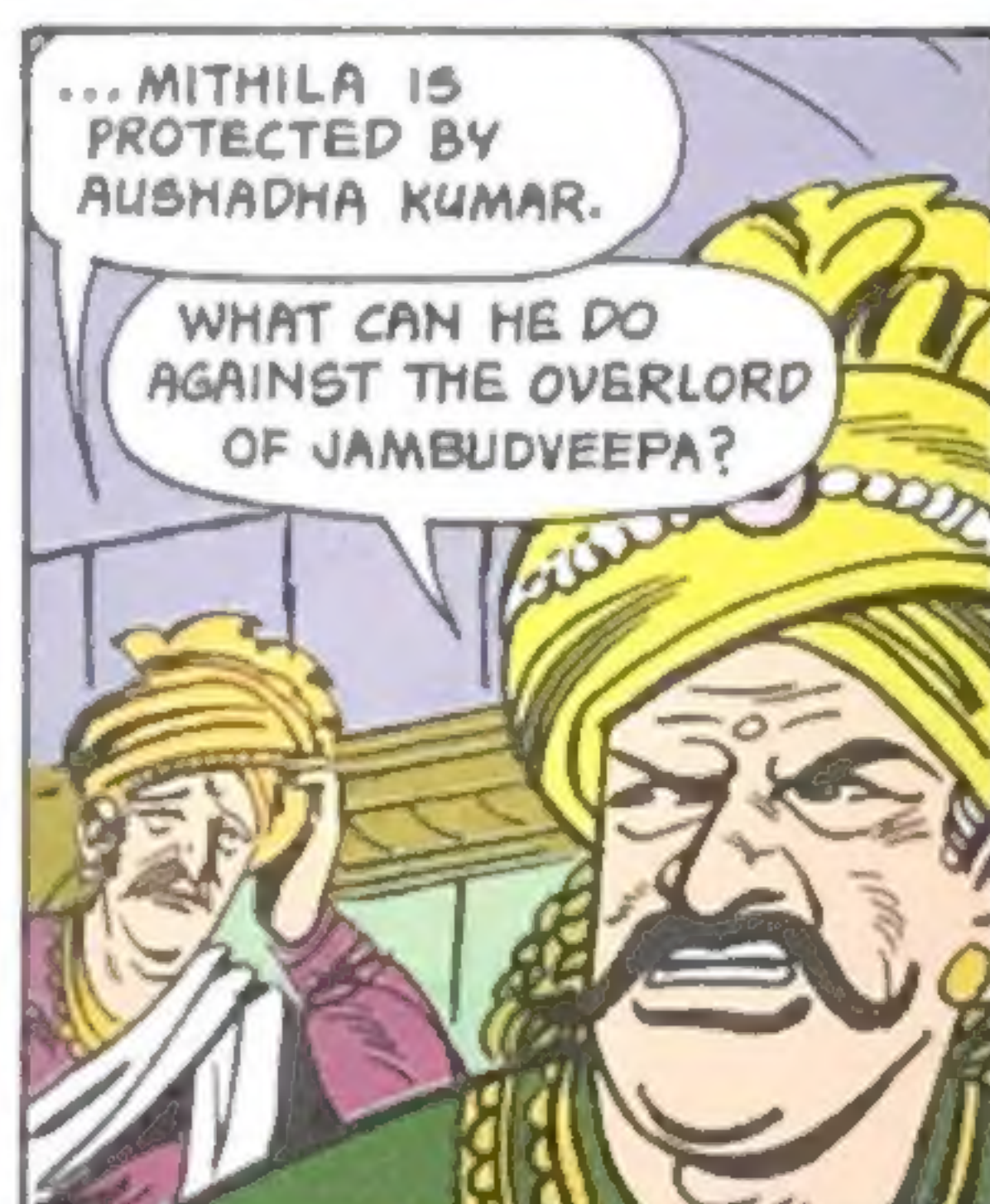
BRAHMADATTA WAS FURIOUS.

RASCALS! THEY HAVE RUINED MY PLANS.



I SHALL ATTACK MITHILA AND BEHEAD VAIDEHA.

MAHARAJ, IT WILL NOT BE AN EASY TASK...



...MITHILA IS PROTECTED BY AUSHADHA KUMAR.

WHAT CAN HE DO AGAINST THE OVERLORD OF JAMBUDVEEPA?



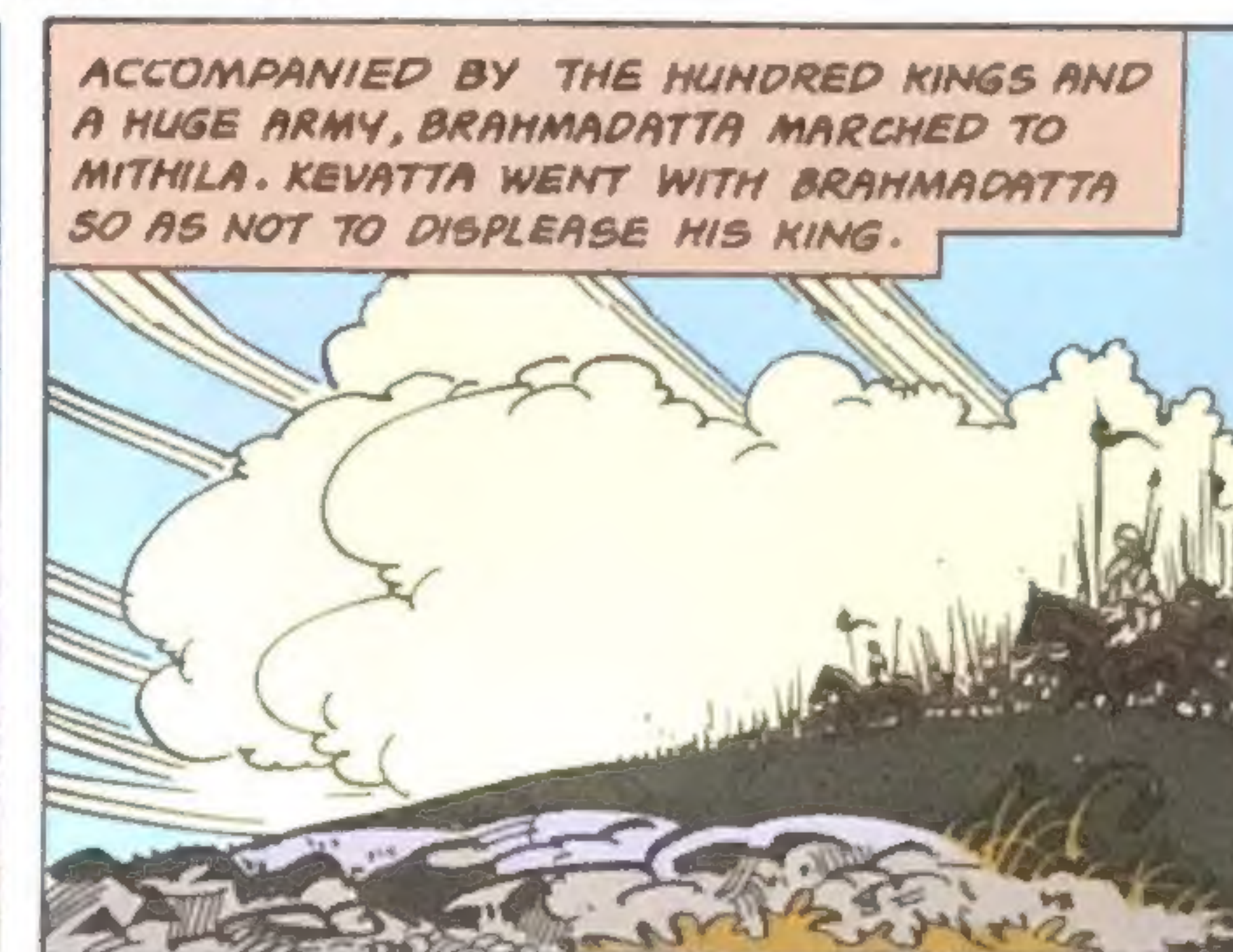
SO BRAHMADATTA INCITED THE HUNDRED KINGS —

THE KING OF MITHILA HAS INSULTED ALL OF US BY RUINING OUR FEAST.



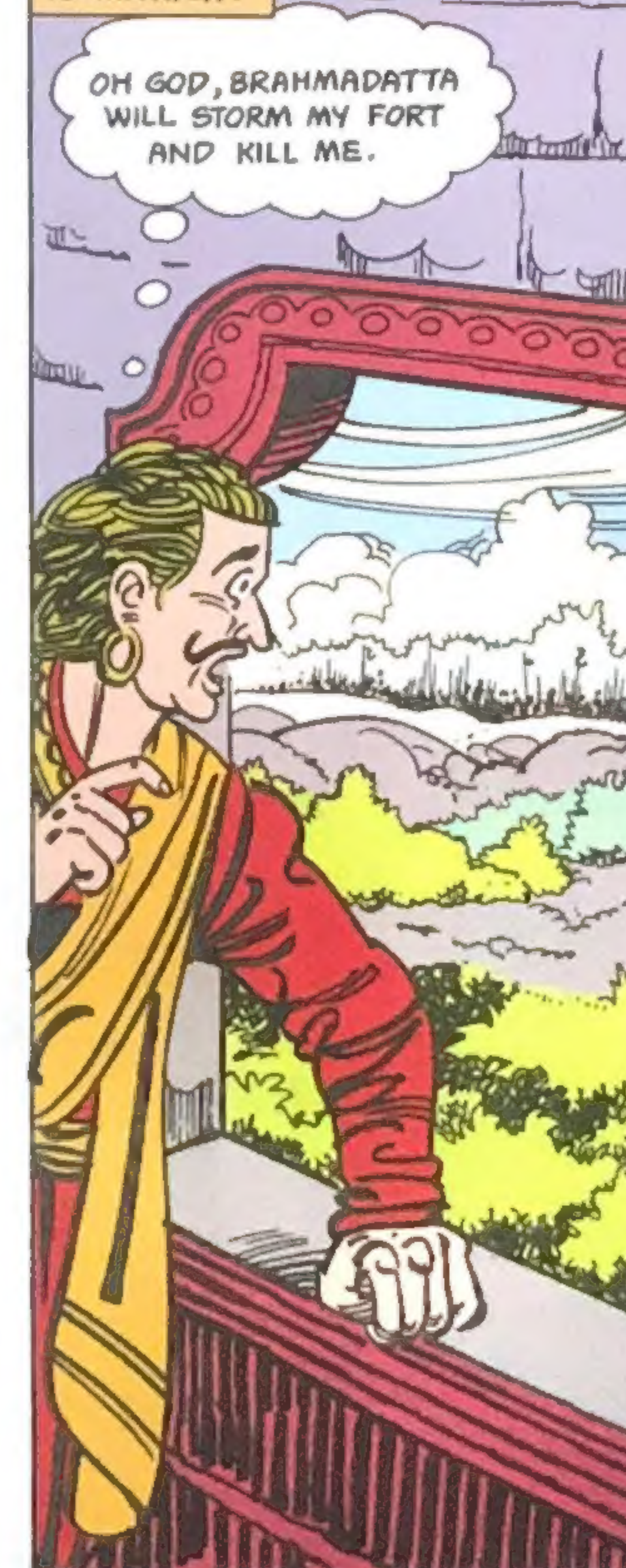
WE SHALL PUNISH HIM.

YES! WE SHALL KILL HIM AND THEN HAVE OUR FEAST.



ACCOMPANIED BY THE HUNDRED KINGS AND A HUGE ARMY, BRAHMADATTA MARCHED TO MITHILA. KEVATTA WENT WITH BRAHMADATTA SO AS NOT TO DISPLEASE HIS KING.

SOON, BRAHMADATTA LAID A SIEGE TO MITHILA.



OH GOD, BRAHMADATTA WILL STORM MY FORT AND KILL ME.

BUT, AUSHADHA KUMAR, UNAFRAID LIKE A LION, INSPECTED THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS. HE THEN REPORTED TO THE KING.



GLORY BE TO KING VAIDEHA!

THE DAYS OF MY GLORY ARE OVER, AUSHADHA. I CAN SEE MY END CLEARLY.



DO NOT FEEL ANXIOUS, MAHARAJ. I HAVE A SOLUTION.



I SHALL SCATTER THE ENEMY JUST AS CROWS ARE DISPERSED WITH A STICK...



... OR JUST AS THE MONKEYS ARE PUT ON THE RUN BY A HANDFUL OF STONES...



... BE RELAXED MAHARAJ, FOR THE ENEMY WILL RUN AWAY LEAVING EVEN THEIR WEAPONS BEHIND.

WHILE PUSHADHA KUMAR WAS TRYING TO ALLAY VAIDEHA'S FEARS, BRAHMADATTA LAUNCHED AN ATTACK ON THE FORT.



THE APPROACH TO THE FORT WAS MADE DIFFICULT BY THE THREE MOATS AROUND IT.



WHEN THE ENEMY SOLDIERS CAME NEAR THE FORT, VAIDEHA AND SOLDIERS SHOWERED THEM WITH STONES AND OTHER MISSILES...



...AND BRAHMADATTA'S ATTACK FAILED MISERABLY.



WHAT SHALL WE DO? SHALL WE LIFT THE SIEGE AND GO BACK?

NO, THAT WILL MEAN A LOSS OF FACE. YOU CANNOT AFFORD THAT AS THE OVERLORD OF JAMBU-DVEEPA.

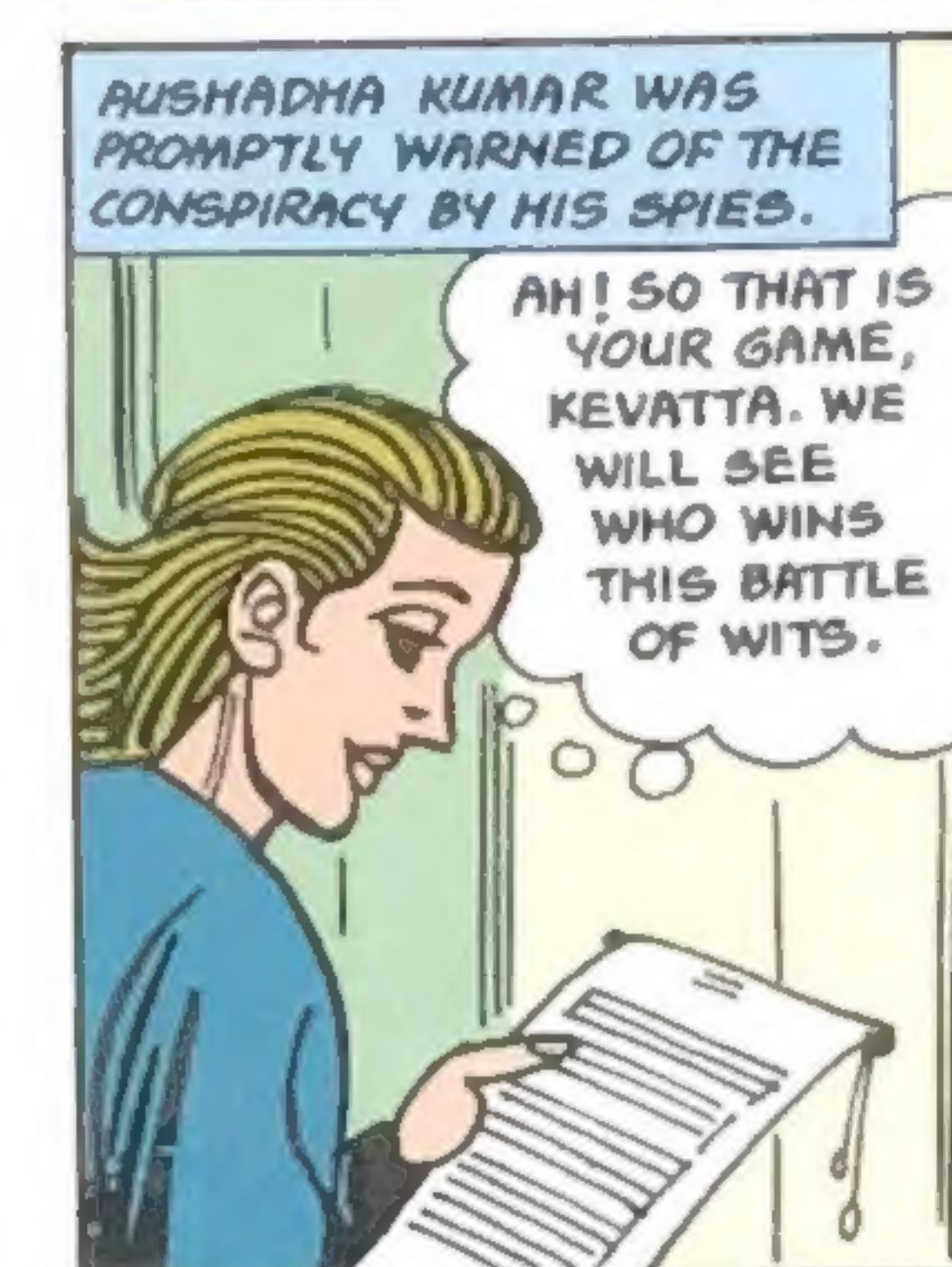


BUT HOW CAN I SAVE MY FACE?

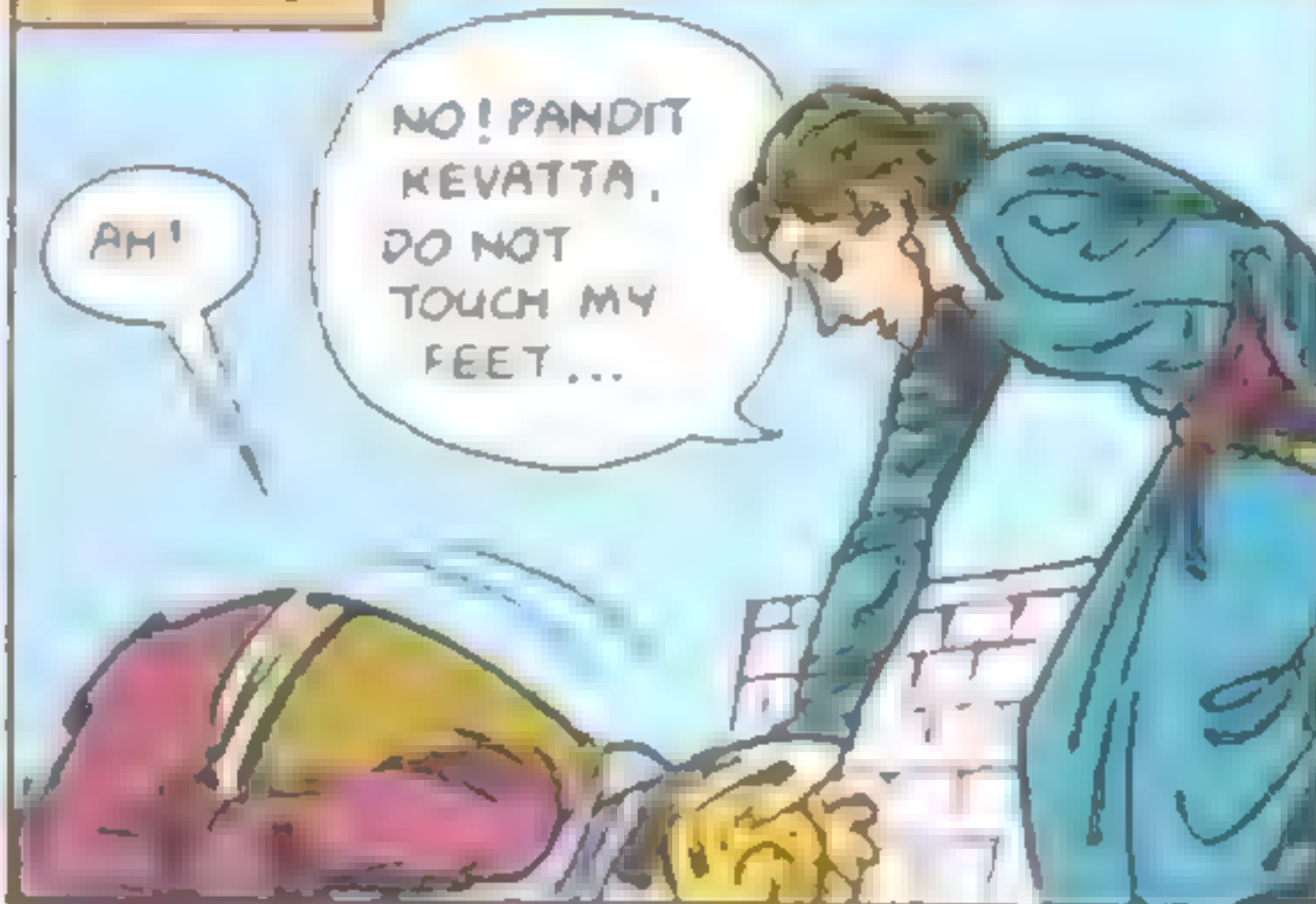
I SHALL USE A TRICK TO GAIN A TOKEN VICTORY.



* BATTLE ACCORDING TO DHARMA.



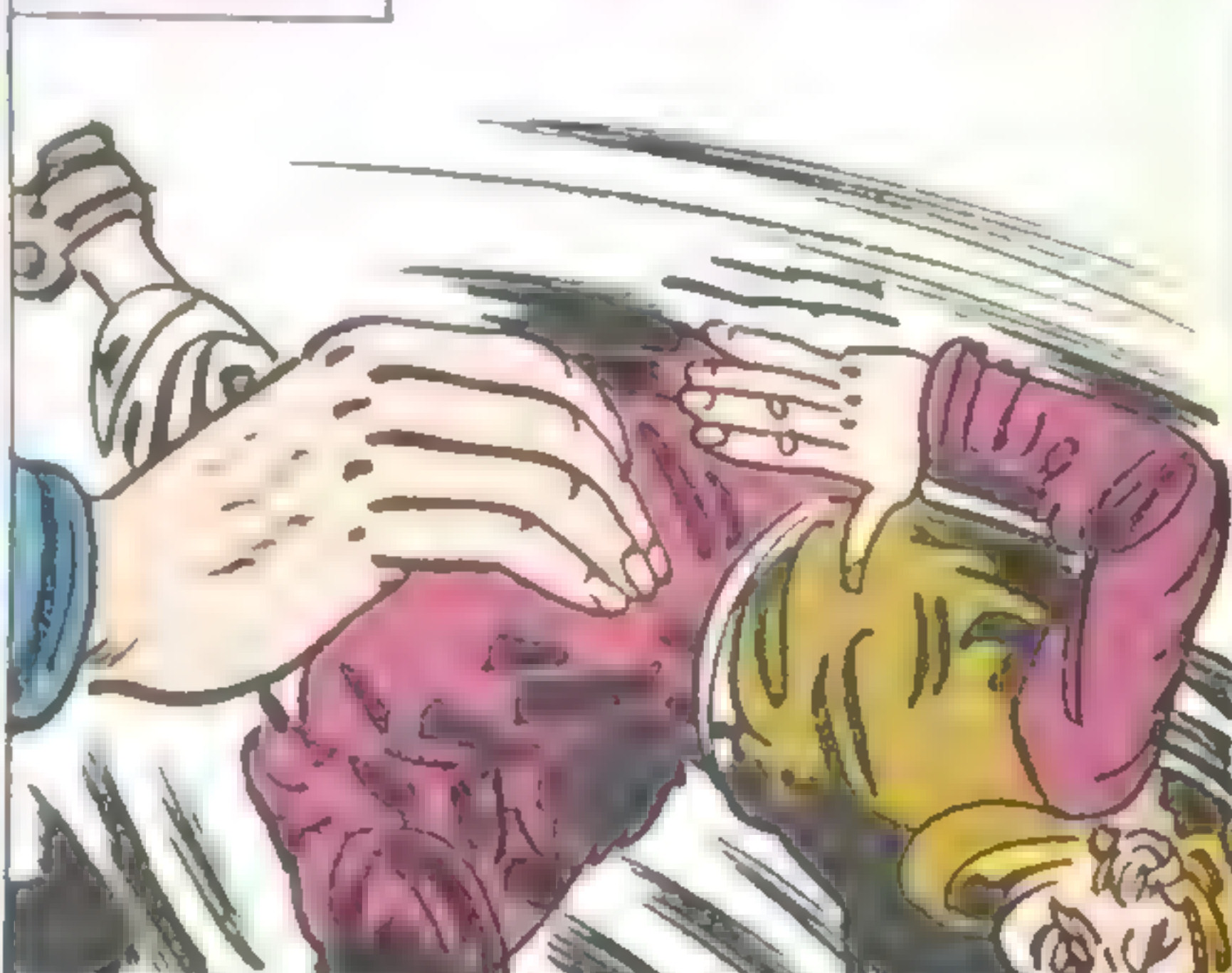
AS SOON AS KEVATTA BENT DOWN, AUSHADHA-KUMAR PLACED HIS HANDS ON KEVATTA'S SHOULDERS AND PRESSED HIS HEAD DOWN ON THE EARTH. THE HEAD STRUCK WITH FORCE AND A DEEP GASH APPEARED ON KEVATTA'S FOREHEAD.



THEN AUSHADHA WHISPERED TO KEVATTA —



AND THEN HE PUSHED KEVATTA AWAY WITH SUCH FORCE THAT KEVATTA FELL DOWN AT A DISTANCE.



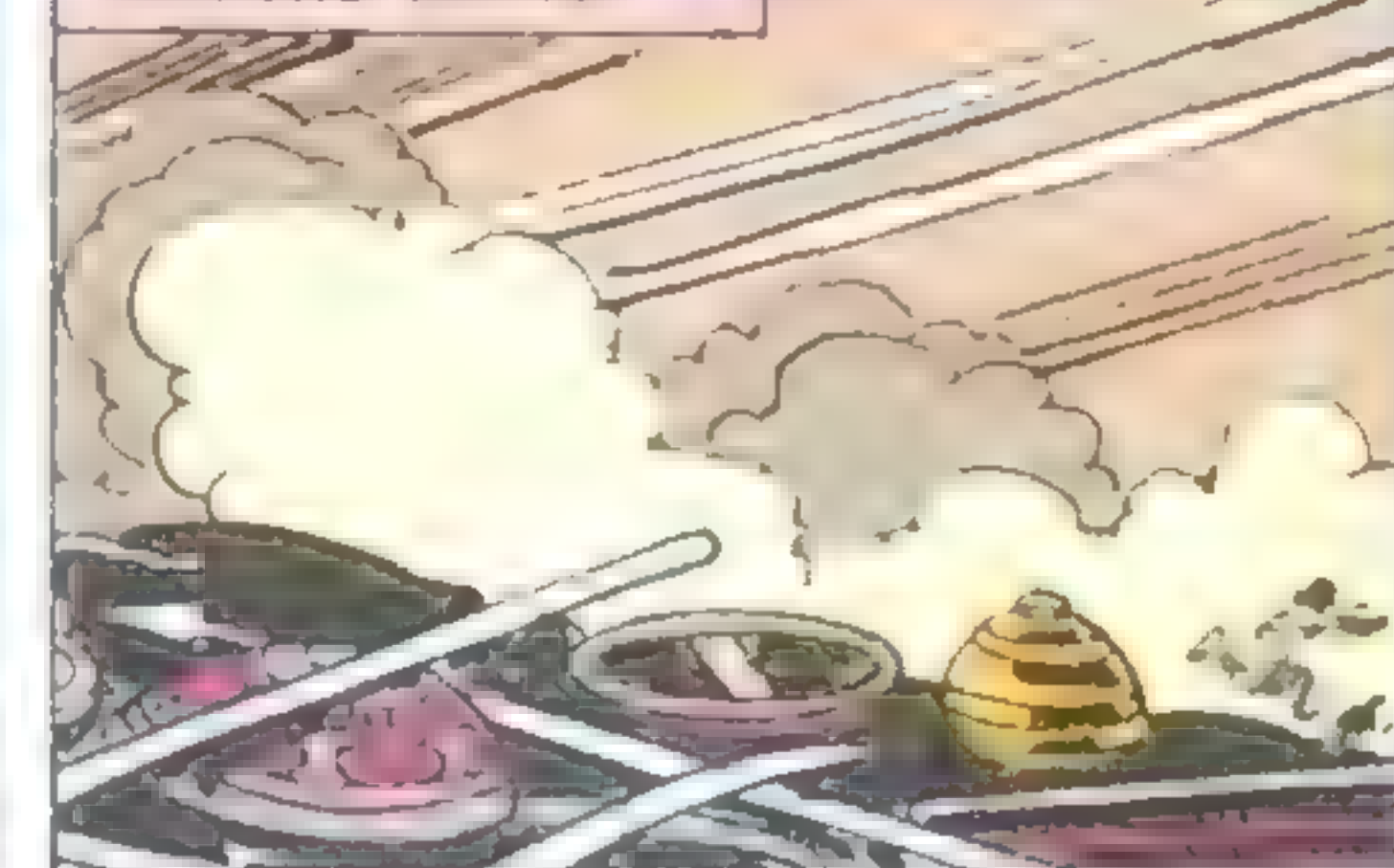
AND IMMEDIATELY AT A PRE-ARRANGED SIGNAL AUSHADHA KUMAR'S ARMED SOLDIERS RUSHED OUT OF VAIDEHA'S FORT KEVATTA RAN AT THE SIGHT OF THE SOLDIERS.



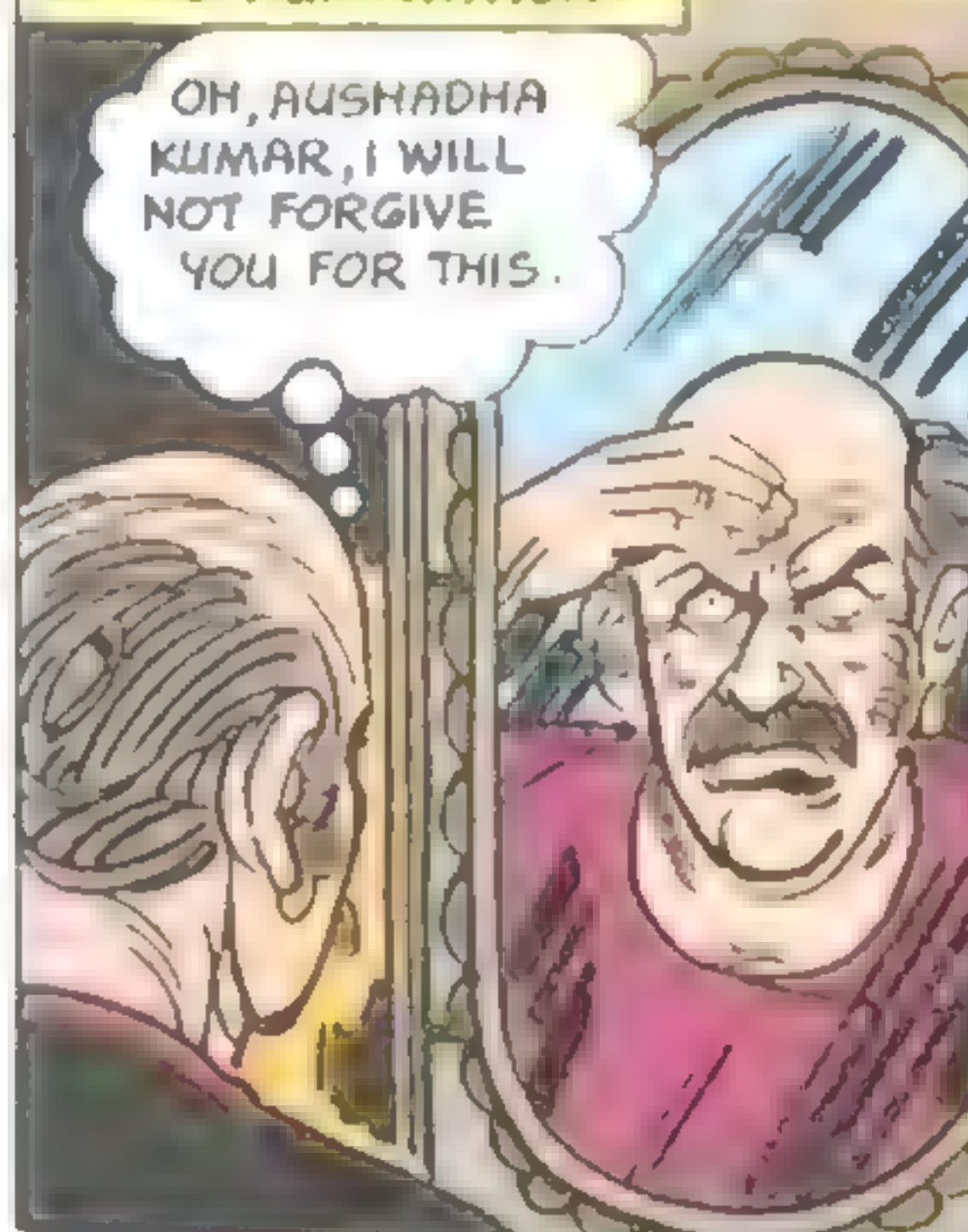
AND SO DID BRAHMADATTA, THE HUNDRED PANIC STRICKEN KINGS AND THEIR SOLDIERS.



AS AUSHADHA KUMAR HAD FORETOLD, THE TERRIFIED ENEMY RAN AWAY LEAVING EVEN THEIR WEAPONS BEHIND.



THE WOUND ON KEVATTA'S FORE-HEAD LEFT A MARK. THE MARK CONSTANTLY REMINDED KEVATTA OF HIS HUMILIATION.



FINALLY, KEVATTA HATCHED A SCHEME.



THIS TIME IT WILL. FOR YOU SHALL OFFER YOUR DAUGHTER TO VAIDEHA.



NO, MAHARAJ. THIS SCHEME WILL WORK BECAUSE...

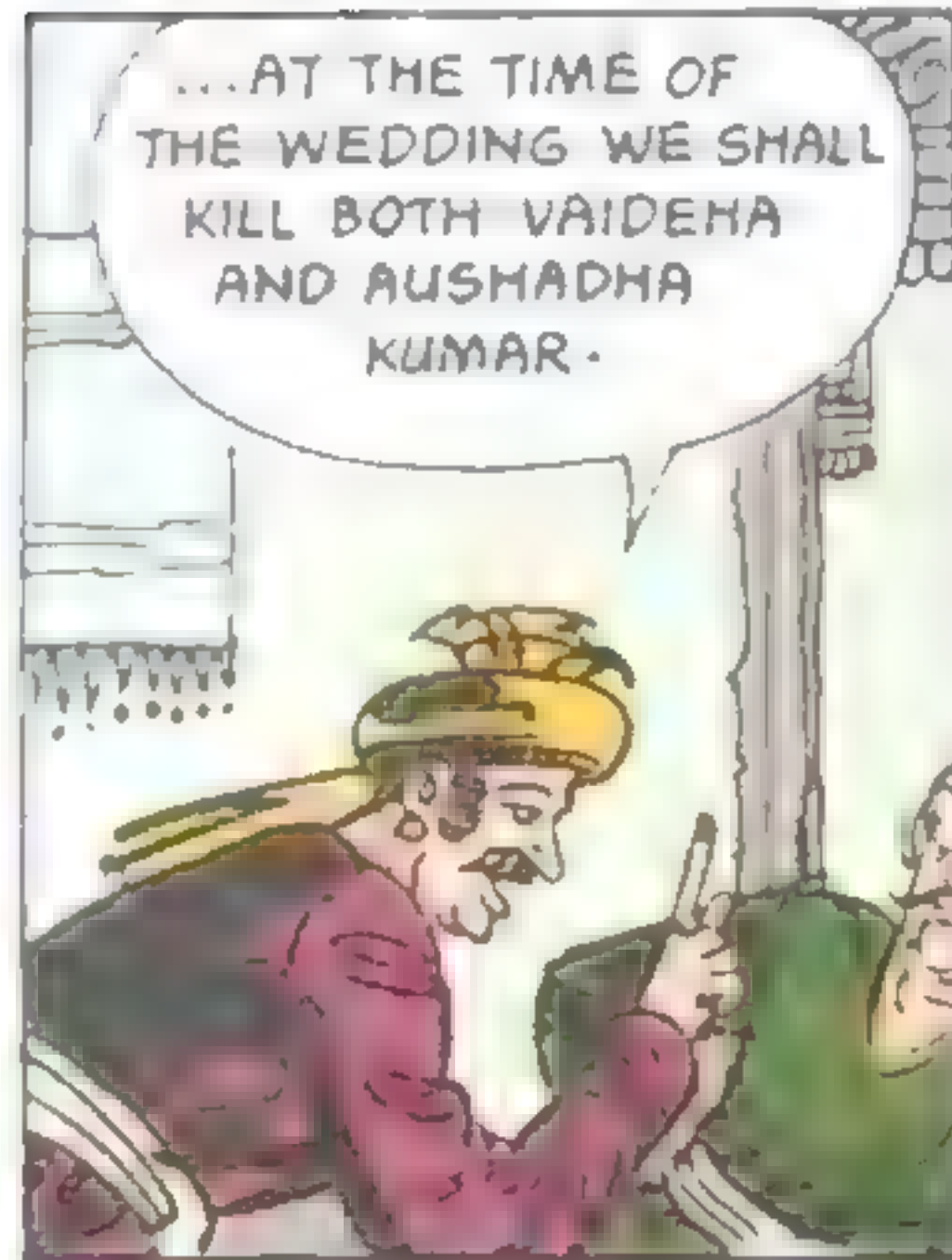


...YOUR DAUGHTER PANCHALA CHANDI IS THE MOST CHARMING MAIDEN IN JAMBUDVEEPA.





VAIDEHA WILL BE LURED BY HER BEAUTY...



...AT THE TIME OF THE WEDDING WE SHALL KILL BOTH VAIDEHA AND AUSHADHA KUMAR.

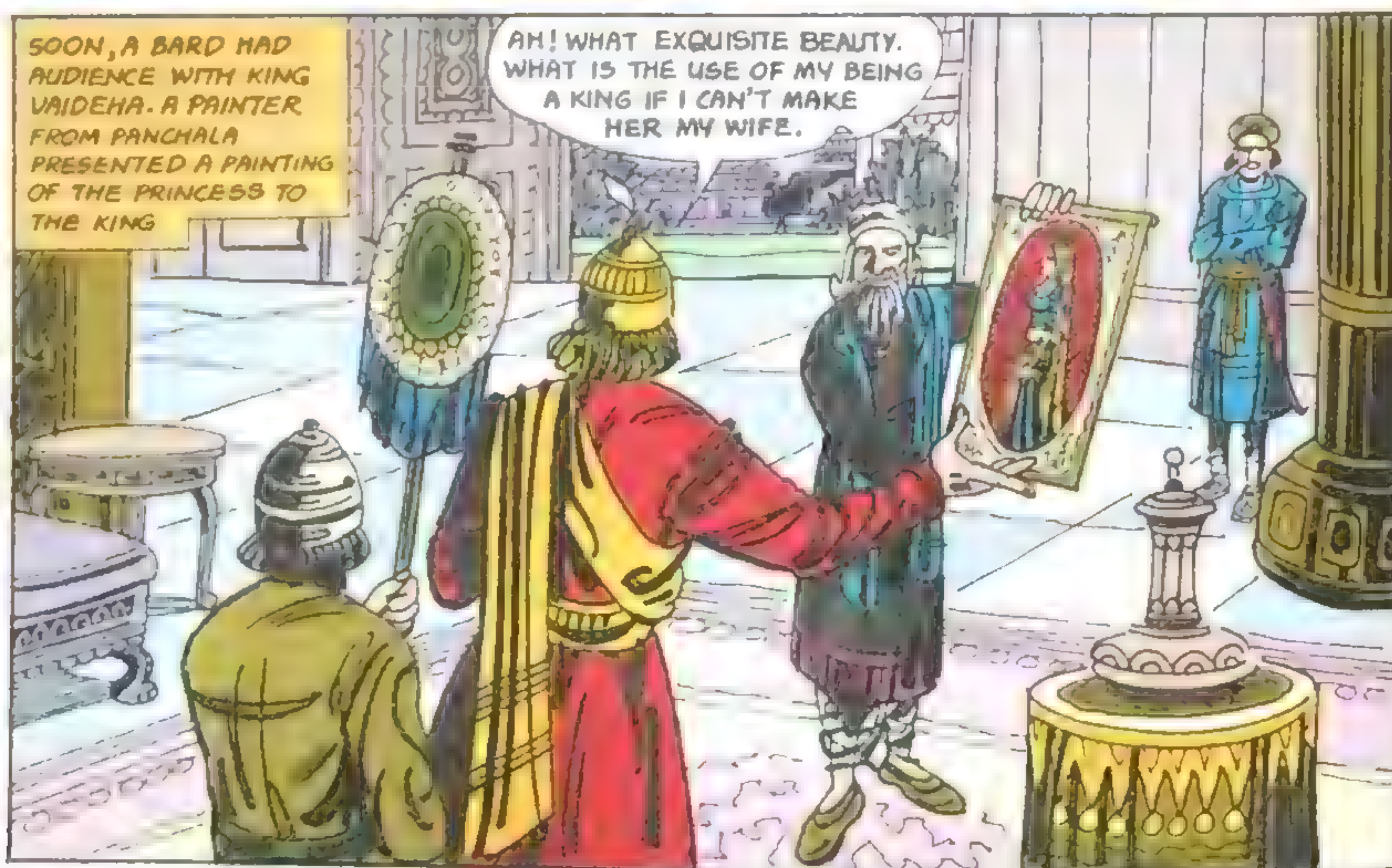


ARE YOU SURE THE SCHEME WILL WORK?

I WILL MAKE SURE THAT IT DOES, MAHARAJ.



KEVATTA PREPARED A METICULOUS PLAN. THE BARDS SENT BY HIM SANG VERSES PRAISING THE ENCHANTING BEAUTY OF THE PANCHALA PRINCESS.



SOON, A BARD HAD AUDIENCE WITH KING VAIDEHA. A PAINTER FROM PANCHALA PRESENTED A PAINTING OF THE PRINCESS TO THE KING.

AH! WHAT EXQUISITE BEAUTY. WHAT IS THE USE OF MY BEING A KING IF I CAN'T MAKE HER MY WIFE.



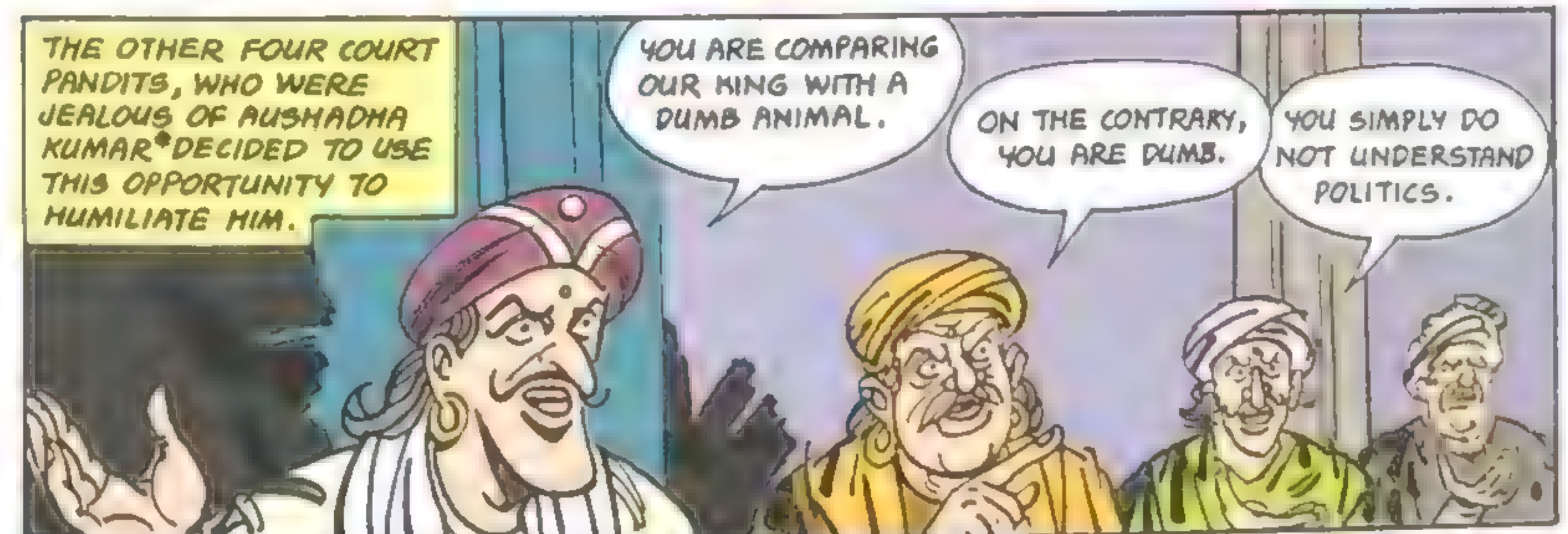
LATER AUSHADHA EXPRESSED HIS DOUBTS.

MAHARAJ, YOU SHOULD NOT ACCEPT THE ALLIANCE.

WHY?



BECAUSE I THINK BRAHMADATTA IS LURING YOU THE WAY A HUNTER USES A TAME DOE TO TRAP A STAG.



THE OTHER FOUR COURT PANDITS, WHO WERE JEALOUS OF AUSHADHA KUMAR* DECIDED TO USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO HUMILIATE HIM.

YOU ARE COMPARING OUR KING WITH A DUMB ANIMAL.

ON THE CONTRARY, YOU ARE DUMB.

YOU SIMPLY DO NOT UNDERSTAND POLITICS.

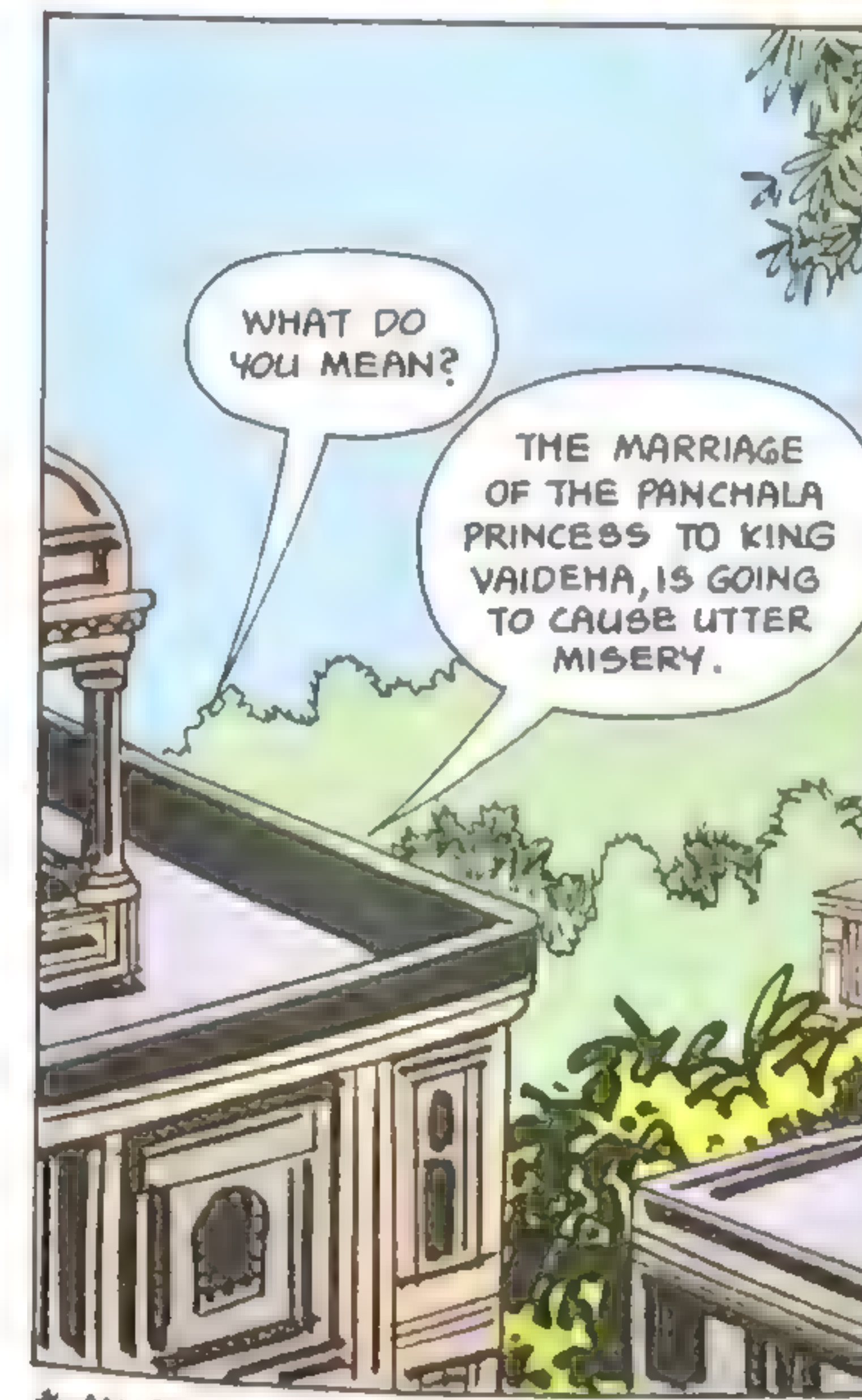
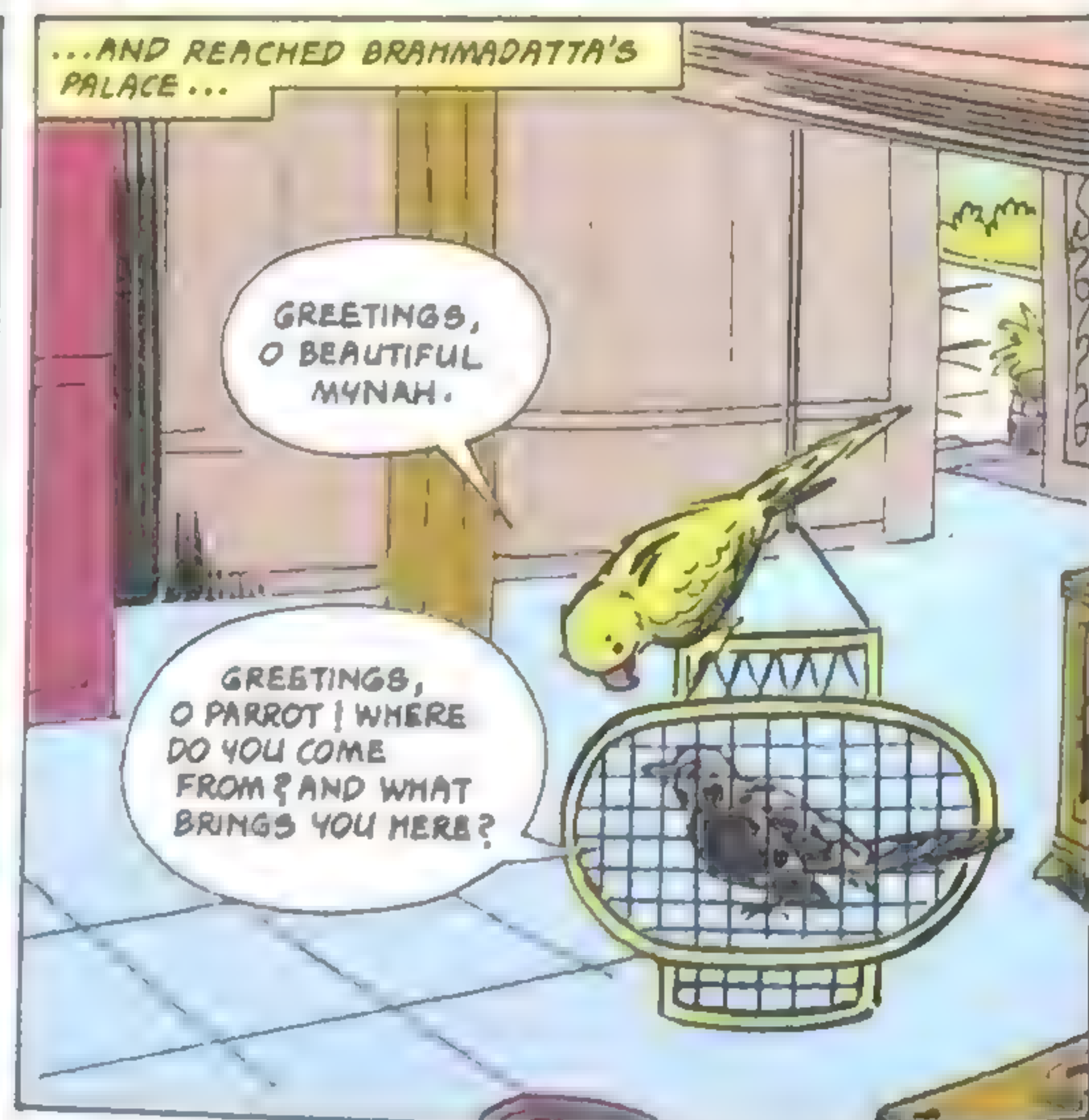
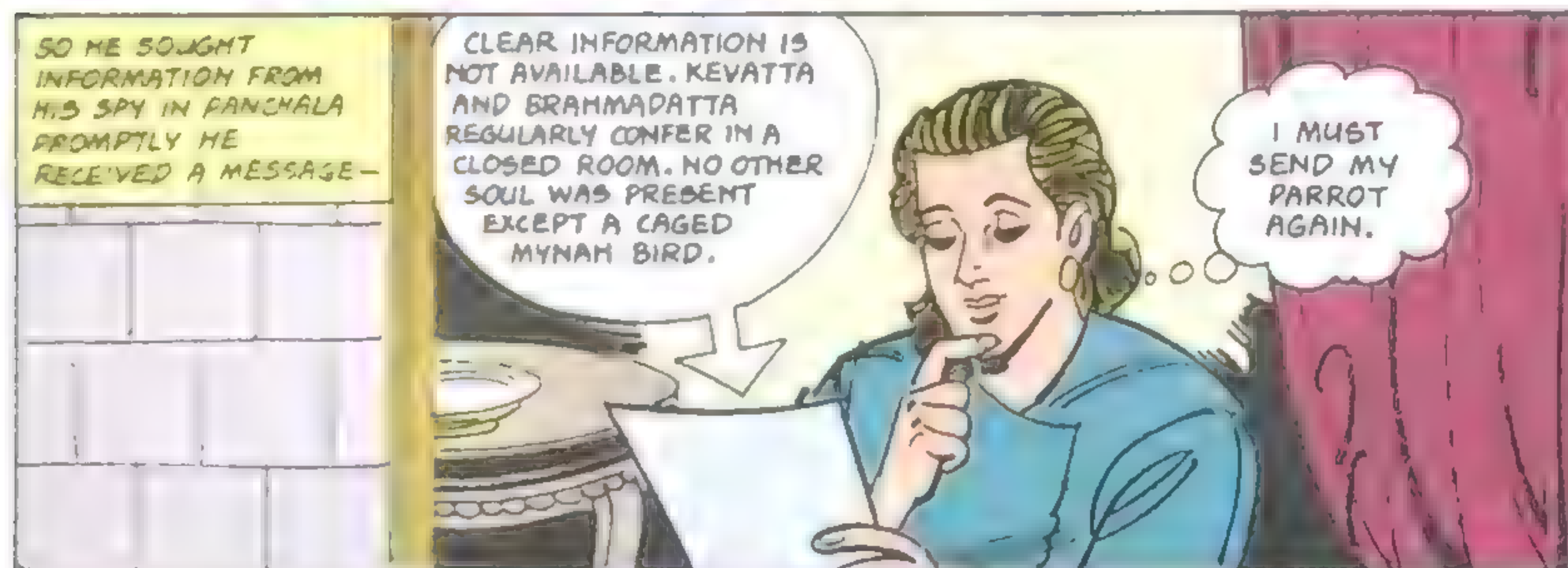


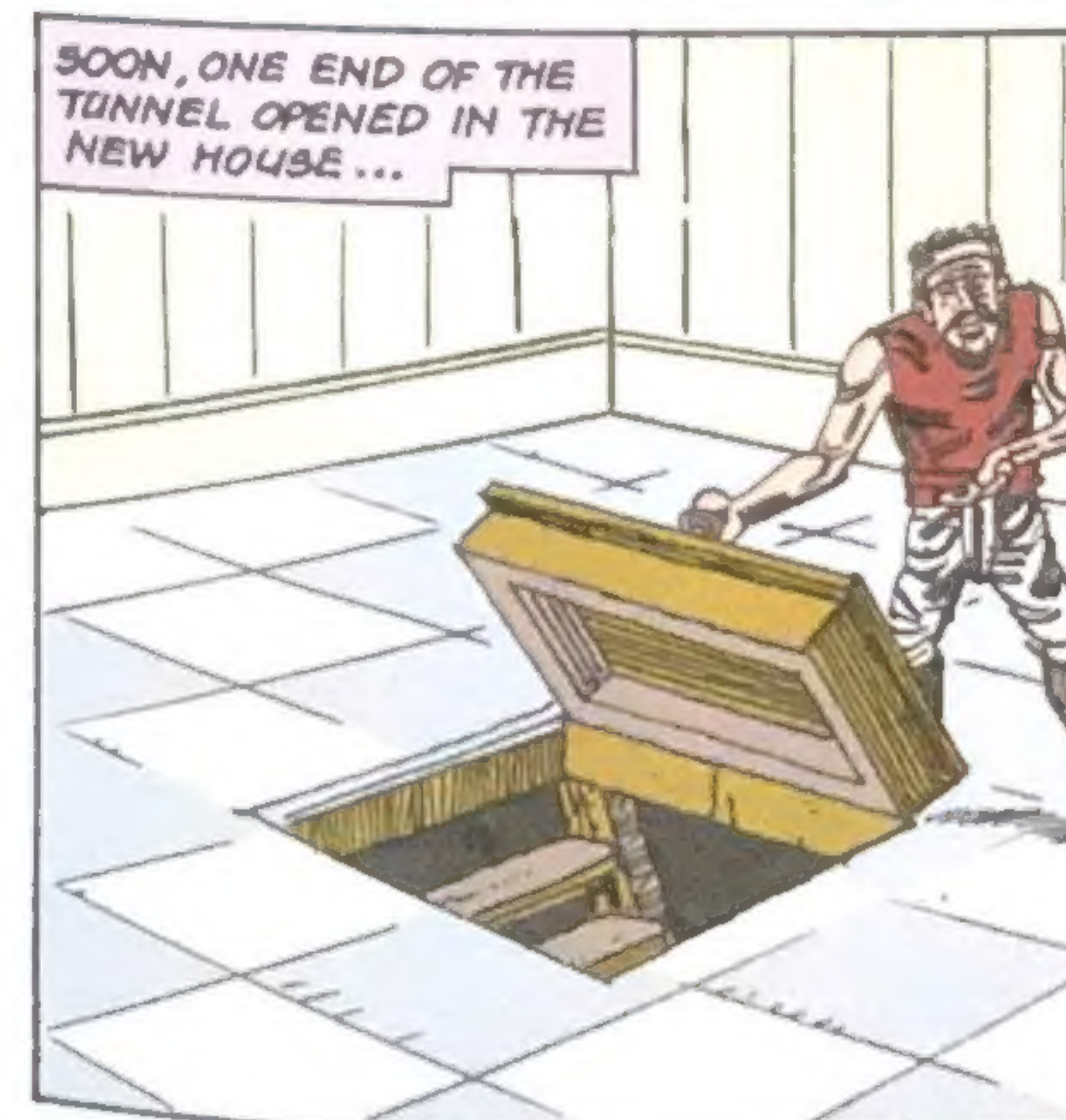
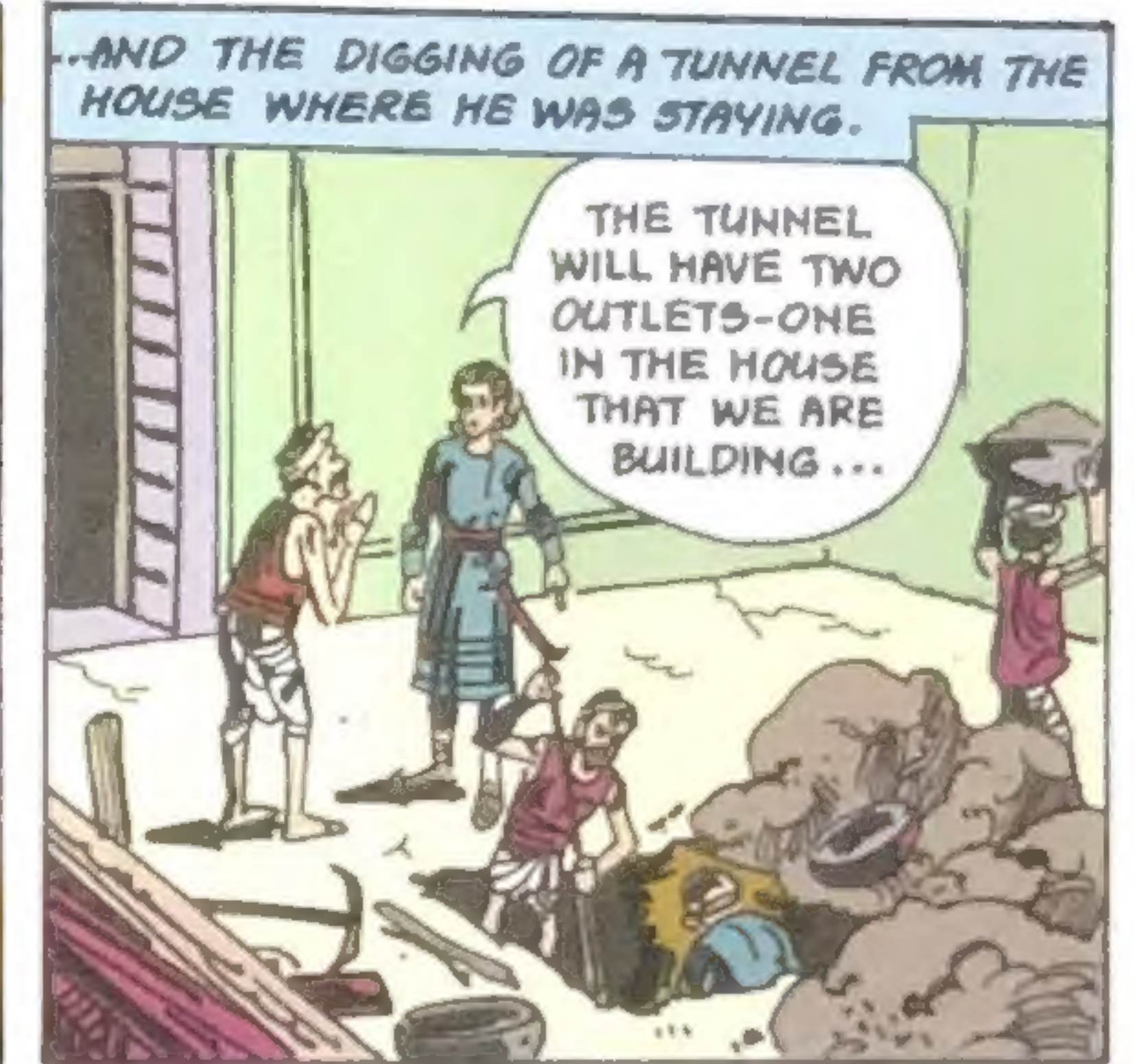
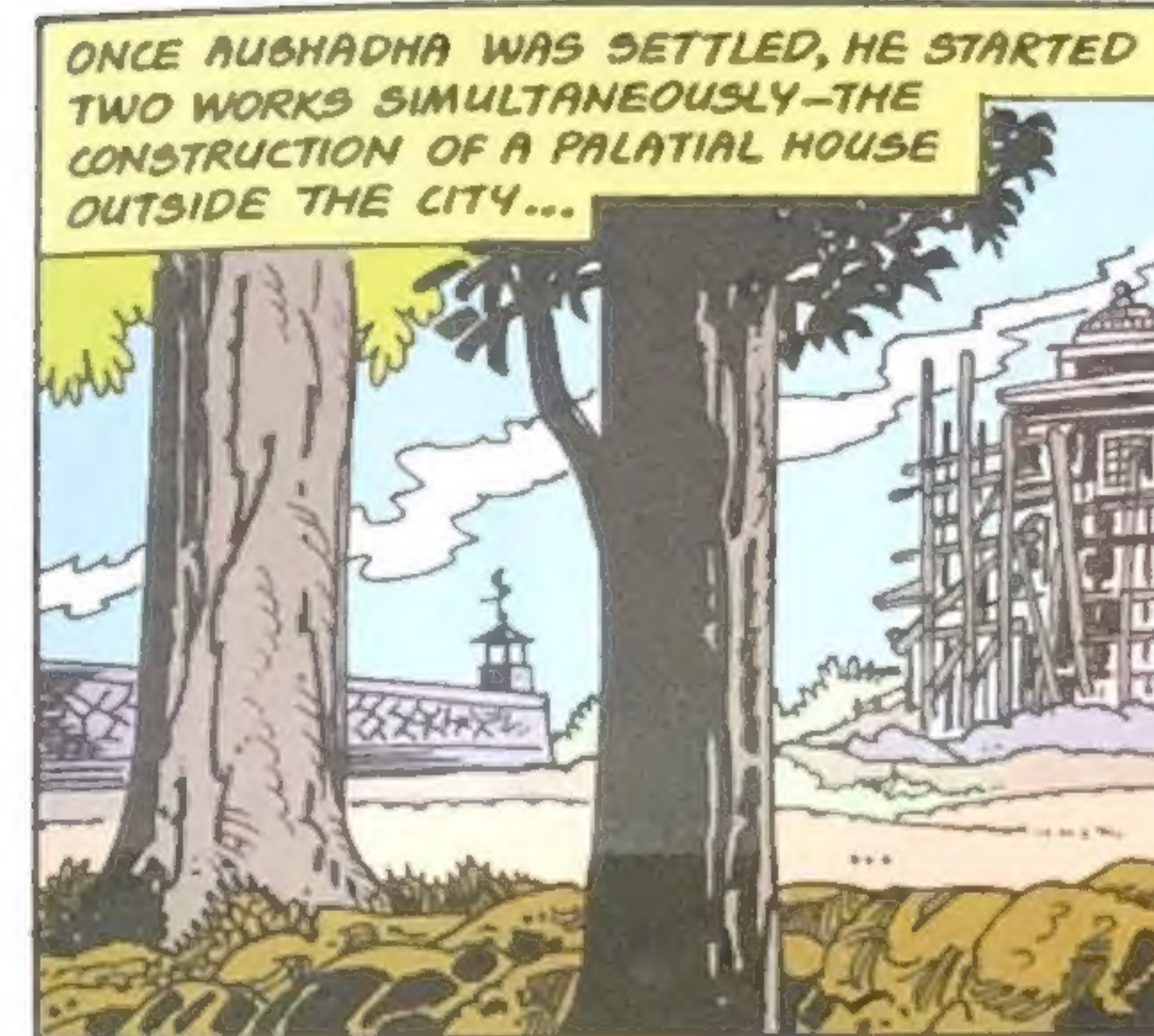
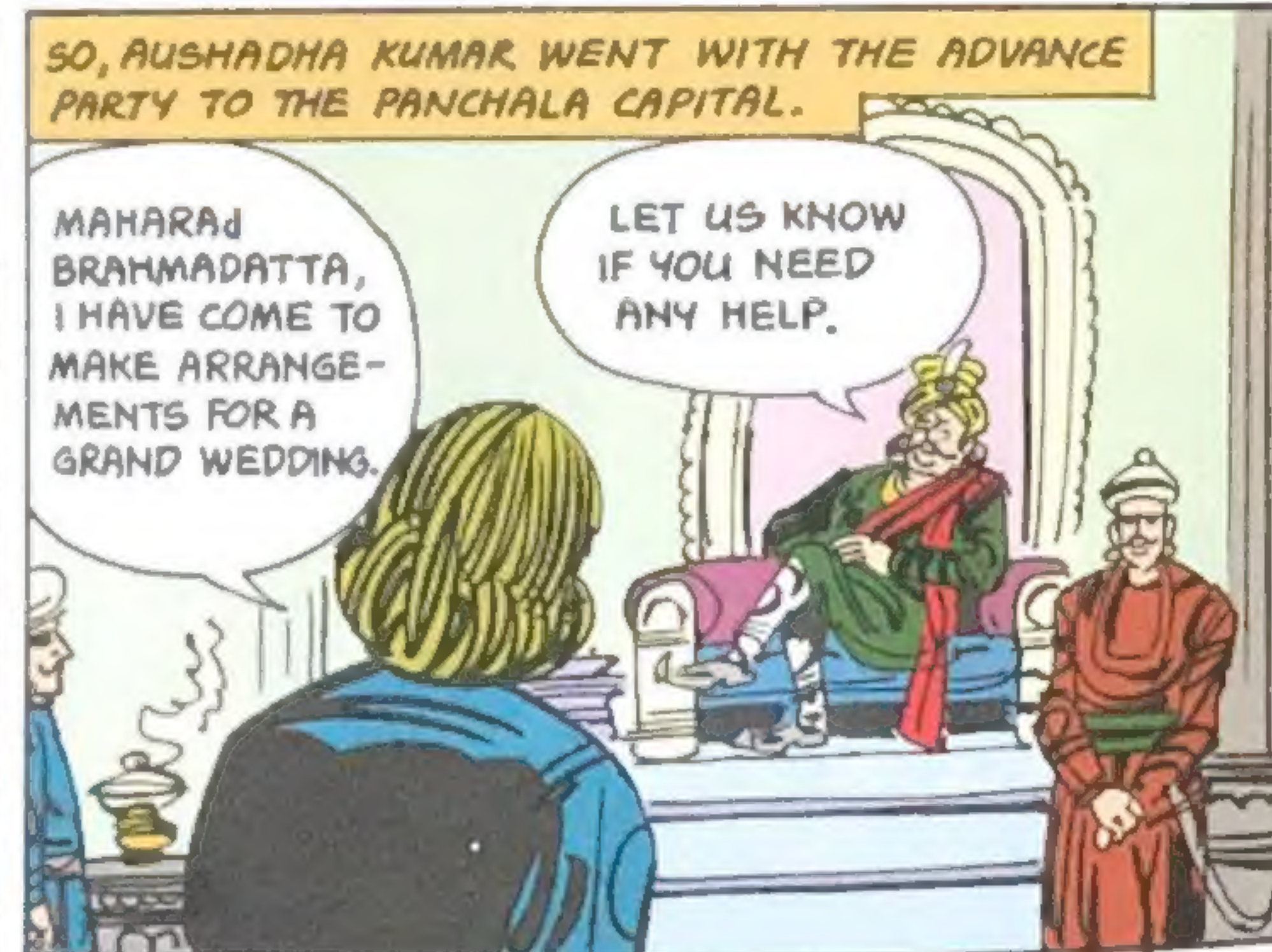
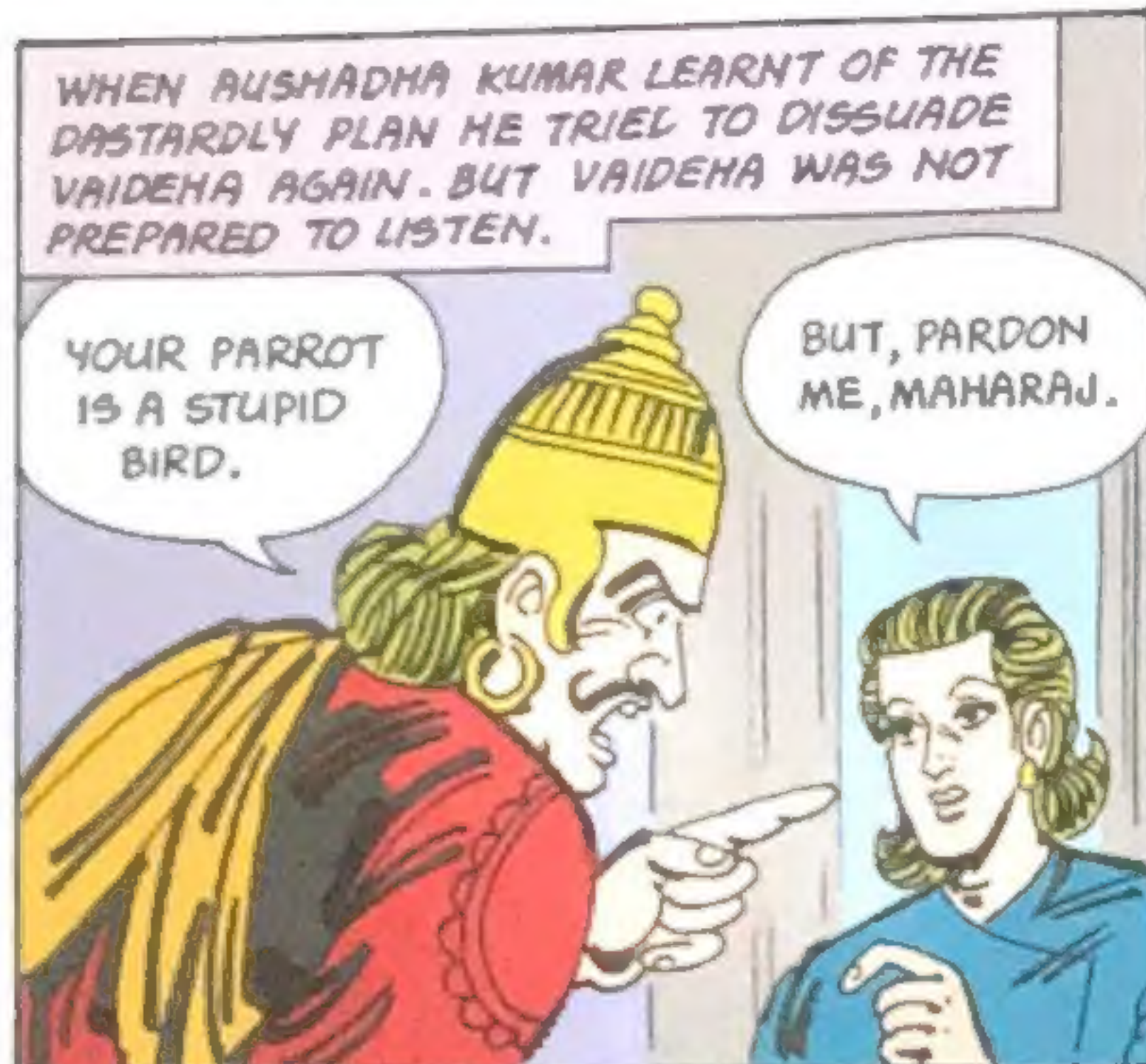
THIS MARRIAGE MUST BE SOLEMNISED. IT WILL HAVE FAR-REACHING POLITICAL ADVANTAGES FOR US...

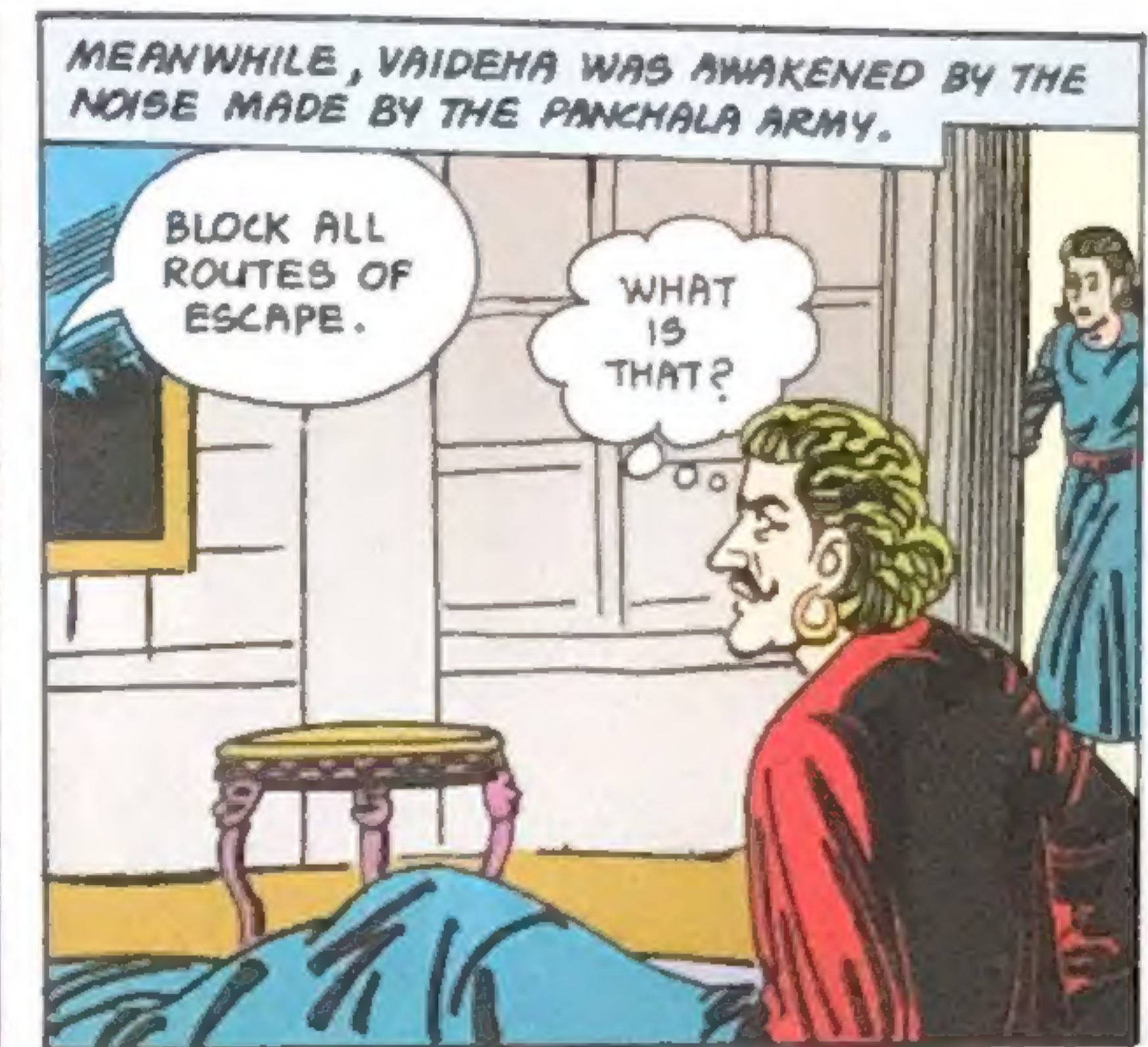
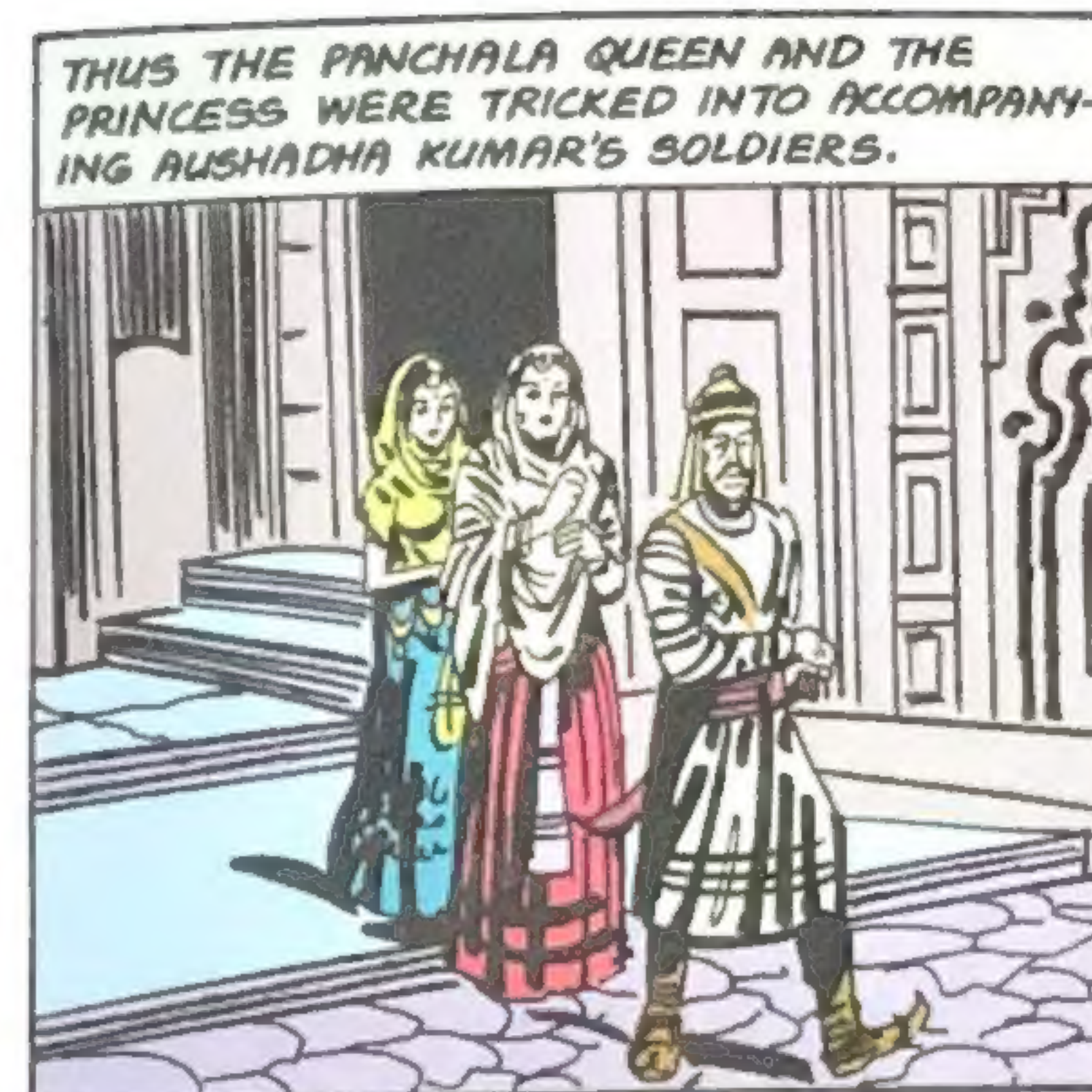
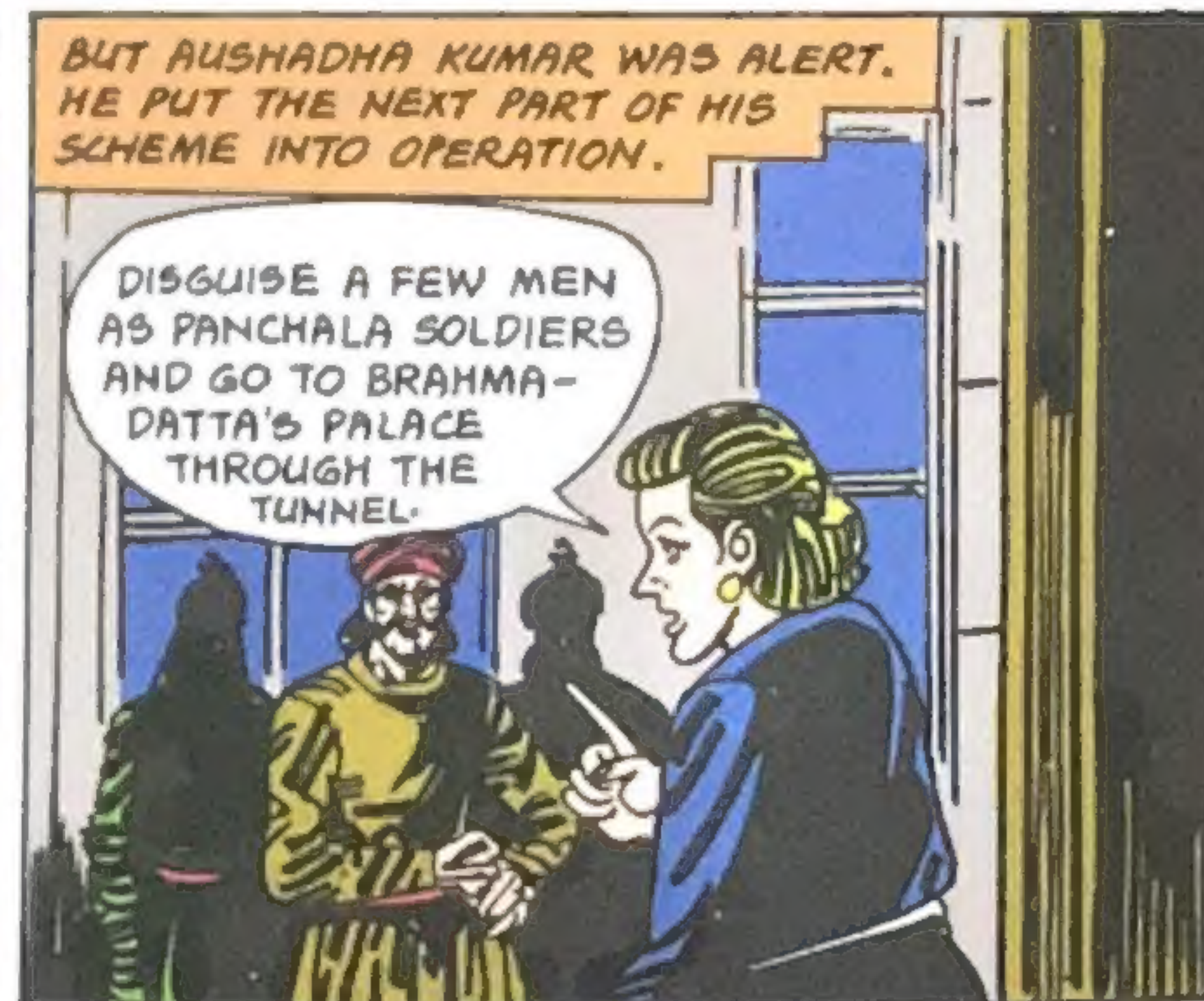
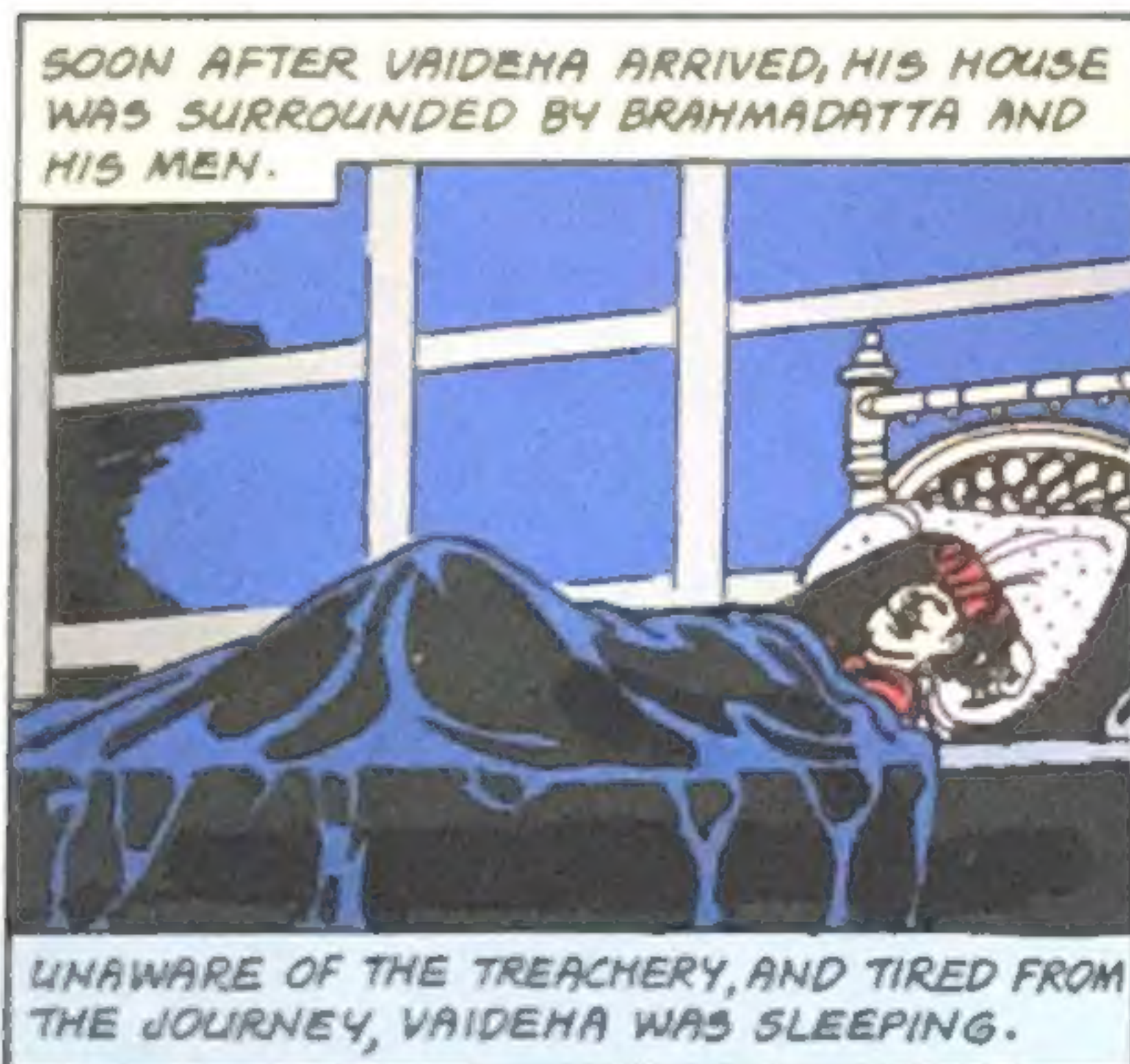
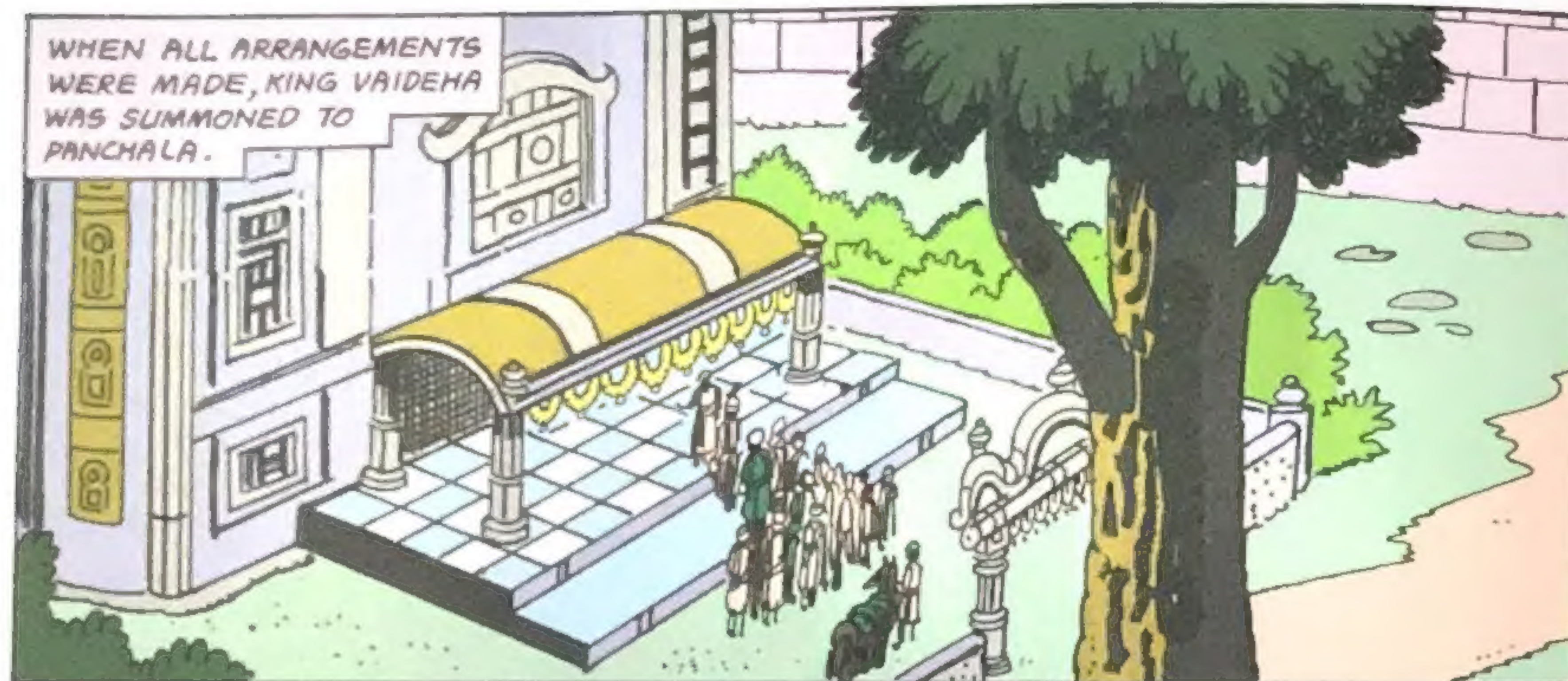


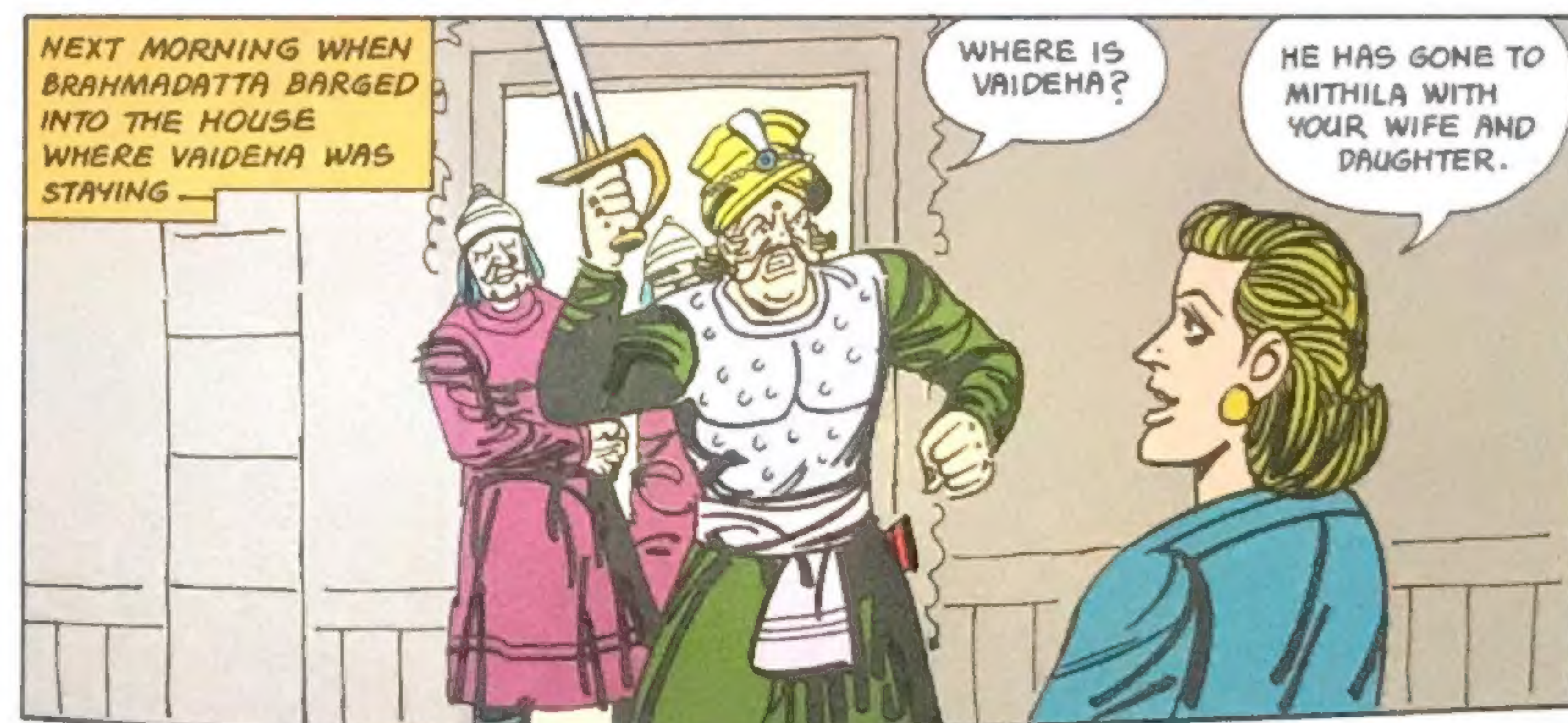
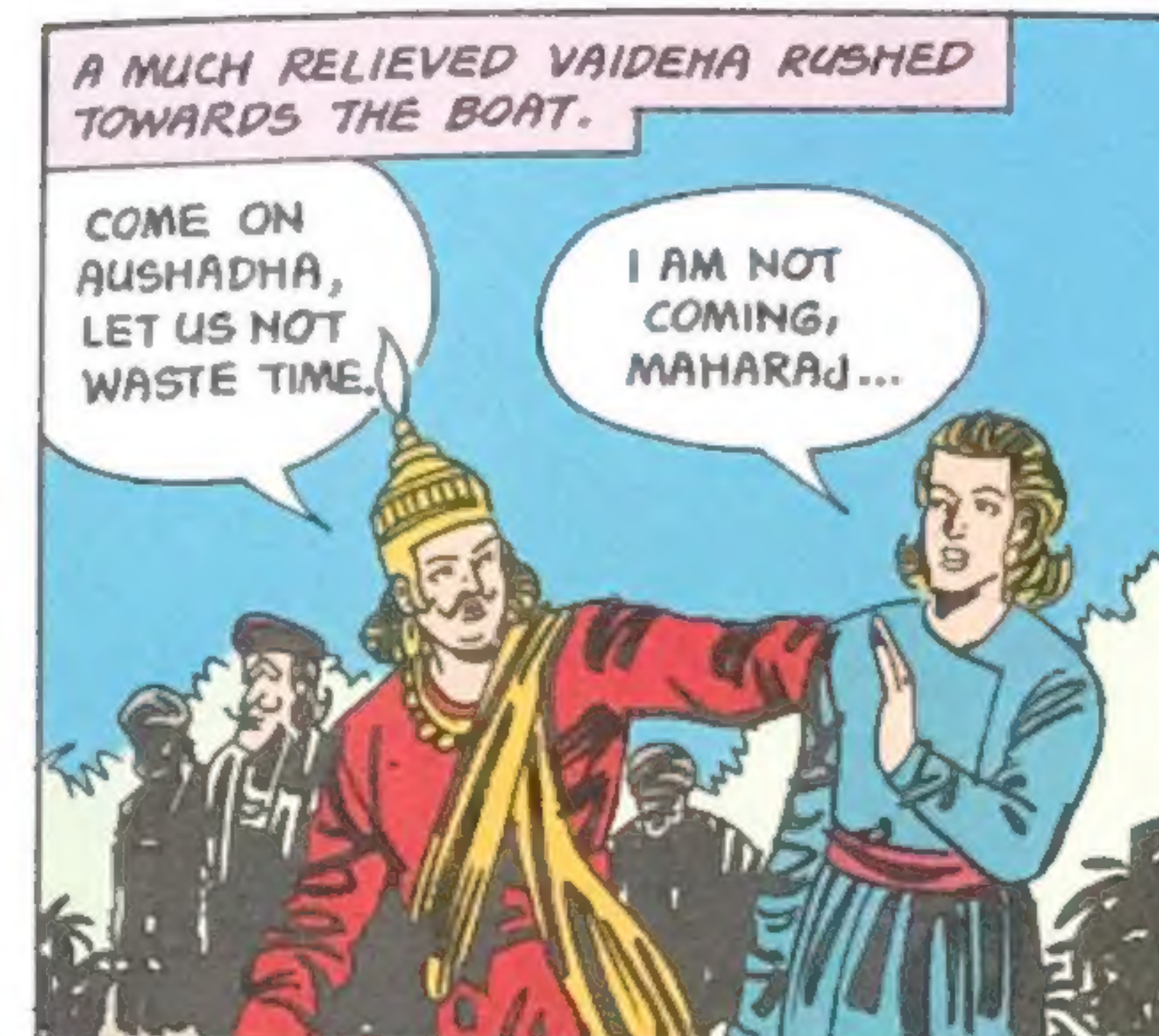
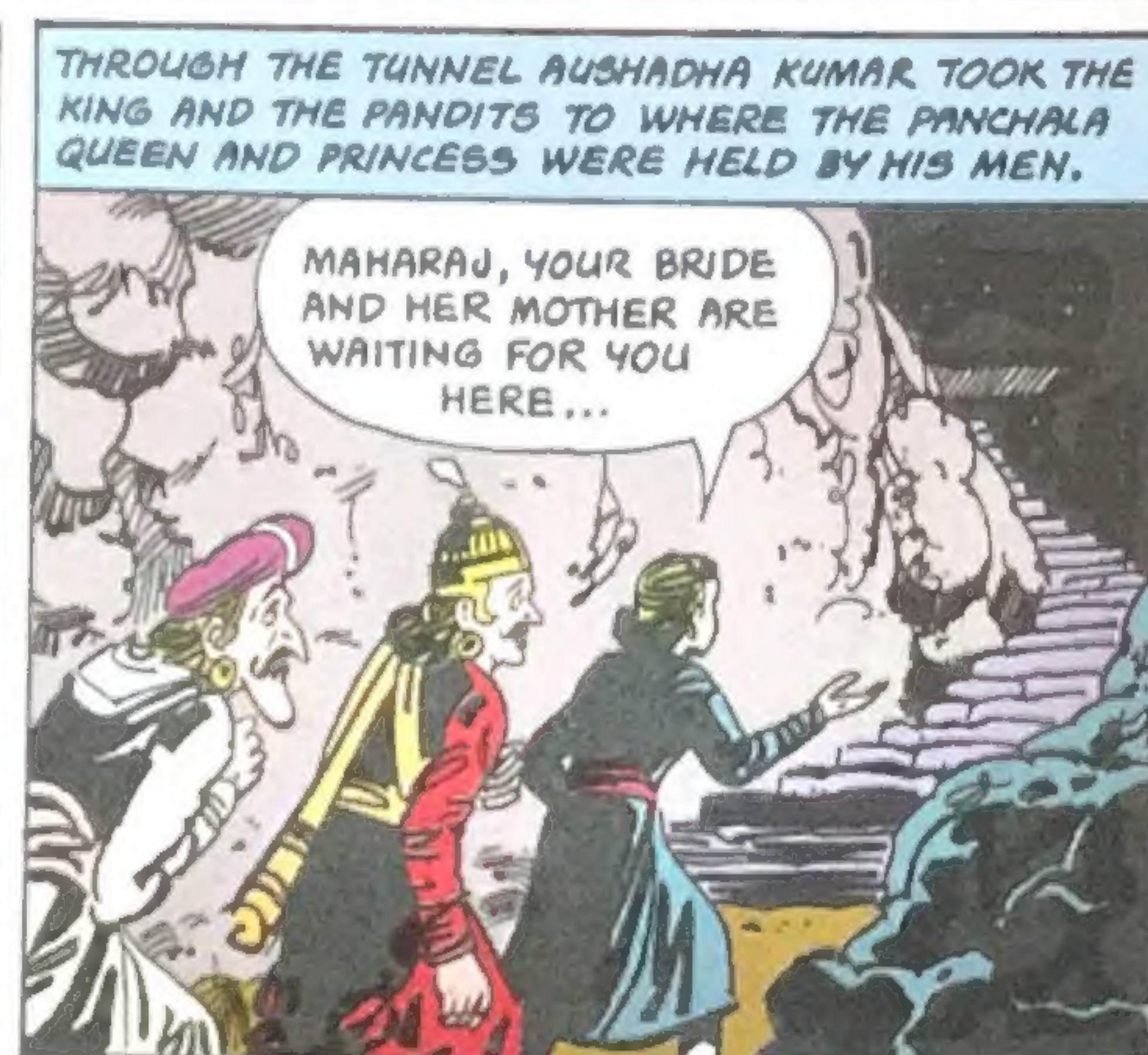
OUR KING WILL BECOME THE SON-IN-LAW OF THE OVERLORD OF JAMBUDVEEPA.

AUSHADHA WAS AFRAID THAT THE MARRIAGE WOULD LEAD TO DISASTER BUT HE DID NOT KNOW HOW TO DISSUADE THE KING.











BUT BRAHMADATTA DID NOT DARE TO PUNISH AUSHADHA AT THE RISK OF HIS WIFE'S LIFE.



SOON, AUSHADHA RETURNED SAFELY TO MITHILA WITH ALL HIS MEN.



THE END.

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